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THE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ROMANIA

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Antoneta Vanc entitled "THE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ROMANIA." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communication and Information.

Peter Gross, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Candace White, Roxanne Hovland, Kenneth Gilbert

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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THE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: U.S. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ROMANIA

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
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Antoaneta Vanc
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation looks at U.S. public diplomacy practices in a country that until twenty years ago was controlled by a hard-line Communist regime: Romania. The study investigates the relationship management approach to public diplomacy employed by U.S. diplomats in Romania and it is the first to empirically test the application of relationship management theory of public relations to public diplomacy.

Through in-depth interviews with seven former U.S. diplomats who served in Romania during 2001-2009, we learn how diplomats must find various ways to build and maintain relationships with the civil society to which they are assigned. The findings reveal that U.S. diplomats' main role in Romania was to engage in direct relationships with members of the civil society and facilitate bilateral relationships between members of the two countries. In addition, this study found a new role of diplomats abroad, that of building communities of like-minded people in the society in which they operate.

This study expands the theoretical framework in public diplomacy by proposing two new models for public diplomacy practice. First, under the relational paradigm, this study establishes the goal of public diplomacy as the management of long-lasting relationships between members of two countries, with the aim to create hubs of networks in the countries of interest. Under the relational paradigm, the newly proposed model for the relationship management process provides an in-depth understanding of how U.S. diplomats engage with members of the Romanian civil society in order to accomplish the public diplomacy goal. Second, to better understand the uniqueness of the relationship management process between any two countries in the world, this dissertation proposes a

framework of public diplomacy built on seven relational dimensions identified here as image, reputation, trust, credibility, communication, dialogue, and relationships.

Testing the relationships management theory in public diplomacy is an important undertaking, which could broaden the scope of public diplomacy and can provide a framework for a comparative line of research between public diplomacy and public relations.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of study

Public diplomacy has gained increased importance in international relations and has garnered much discussion in the academic world in the last decade. Specialists in marketing, sociology, journalism, communication, public relations, and other fields provide arguments regarding what their respective disciplines can bring to public diplomacy and what practitioners can learn from findings that are generated by studies. A multidisciplinary approach would continue to advance the practice of public diplomacy from being, in the popular view, the instrument for simply peddling information to foreigners, to the more versatile and multi-faceted profession that it has become today, as Melissen (2005) for instance, suggested,

> The new public diplomacy is no longer confined to messaging, promotion campaigns, or even direct governmental contacts with foreign publics serving foreign policy purposes. It is also about building relationships with civil society actors in other countries and about facilitating networks between non-governmental parties at home and abroad. (p. 22)

This dissertation seeks to participate in the discussion which avers that public diplomacy is about building and maintaining relationships with foreign publics (both mass and elite), civil societies, and cultures. More specifically, this work responds in part to the call by Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 211) to participate in building a research agenda that examines the "theoretical and practical links between public diplomacy and public relations," and "the need to map out the diversity of initiative political entities use to communicate with publics" idea advanced by Zaharna (2009, p. 97). In light of Wilson's

(2008, p. 110) affirmation that public diplomacy scholars "tend to frame their arguments poorly, and their positions are often politically naïve and institutionally weak," this study will not try to validate political arguments or actions, but rather present and analyze diplomatic activities pertaining to the relational initiatives of public diplomacy, practices that are fast becoming "familiar fixtures in traditional diplomacy" (Zaharna, 2009, p. 93).

One way to analyze the public diplomacy practices of a country is through the examination of the country's official representations abroad, especially its embassies with their ambassadors and the diplomatic staff. The empirical analysis in this dissertation is based on the investigation of the relationship management function of ambassadors and other diplomats abroad and their efforts to adjust "to the rise of multiple actors in international affairs" (Melissen, 2005, p. 24). This work also aims to understand the degree to which diplomats are involved with the private sector and their new role as facilitators in the creation and management of relationship networks (Hocking, 2005; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2005).

By focusing on the long-term component of public diplomacy, relationship building with foreign publics, this work strays from the mainstream research in public diplomacy in which the center of attention is on short-term components that emphasize the importance of the official message: information exchange and the advocacy role of diplomats in foreign countries. Scholars and practitioners alike agree that in practice, "diplomatic emissaries who interface with publics abroad are expected to advocate official policy and at the same time show a willingness to understand when policies are criticized" (Kelley, 2009, p. 72). In line with the mainstream categories identified in the practice of public diplomacy, such as information, influence, and engagement, most

scholars observe, "public diplomacy is fundamentally a two-part process shared by the substance of foreign policymaking and the message exchange capacity of international communications" (Kelley, 2009, p. 72).

However, this work adheres to the literature that is investigating public diplomacy from its relational perspective (Fitzpatrick, 2007) and long-term approach (Hocking, 2005; Melisen, 2005; Schneider, 2006; Zaharna, 2009). Still, in general, public diplomacy "appears heavily weighted under the information campaigns split of from the relational framework," but "whatever the reason relational initiatives need to be more vigorously explored and documented" (Zaharna, 2009, p. 96).

This study contributes to the literature that argues that countries build and maintain relationships, promote their image, and build their reputation and credibility through public diplomacy, which involves dialog, collaboration, and mutual exchanges. These are relevant topics, because the literature is not that precise in showing specifically how countries employ public diplomacy, and how it contributes to successful international relations over time. This dissertation aims to build on the newly-adopted proposition that the relationship management theory of public relations in public diplomacy flows from a "journalistically inspired communication function to a relationship management function" (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 203).

Perspectives on the study of public diplomacy

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, there is a renewed interest in public diplomacy and in understanding its nature and role(s). One specific area that has seen much focus by scholars in many fields is the U.S. public diplomacy

practices in the Arab and Muslim world (Blinken, 2003; Brown, 2003; Charney & Yakatan, 2005; Cohen, 2003; Djerejian, 2003; Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Fabrycky, 2005; Fakhreddinne, 2004; Gilboa, 2005; Hoffman, 2002; Kamalipour & Snow, 2004; Kinnane, 2004; Leonard & Smewing, 2003; Lord, 2006; Mor, 2006, 2007; Muravchik, 2002; Nelles, 2004; Ross, 2003; Telhami, 2002; Zaharna, 2003). Scholars agree that after September 2001, the new public diplomacy has gained in importance and "plays a more critical role in gaining support for American interests in countries whose leaders are suspicious, hostile or simply indifferent to U.S. interests" (Kushlis & Sharpe, 2005, p. 28).

A number of public diplomacy scholars, however, argue that the extensive debates on the relationship between the West and the Islamic world overlooked the relationships between countries in other parts of the globe (Melissen, 2005). Indeed, the strong emphasis on the "war on terror" in the Islamic world is only a part of a wider context of world-wide public diplomacy efforts conducted by the United States. The missing component in public diplomacy is a "lack of analysis of deeper trends" that would allow the development of the field from the "official communication with foreign publics" toward a wider perspective (Melissen, 2005, p. xix-xx).

Overall, the academic interest in public diplomacy revealed in the literature shows the existence of three main scholarly approaches to the study of public diplomacy. The first approach comes from the communication, journalism, and media scholars, and aims to understand the ways communication technology has revolutionized the practice of diplomacy. The second approach is in the focus of international relations scholars and public diplomacy practitioners and focuses on the nature and role of public diplomacy

practices. Finally, the third approach comes from the field of public relations were scholars took an interest in the long-term approach to public diplomacy, focusing on dialogue and mutuality as key elements necessary for building, maintaining, and improving relationships with foreign publics.

Below is an elaboration on each approach that informs this dissertation contextually if not conceptually:

Journalism and media approach on public diplomacy scholarship

Media scholars have focused on analyzing the ways communication technology has revolutionized the practice of diplomacy and on how mass communication in this context has affected foreign audiences both in times of peace and war (Fortner, 1994; Entman, 2008, Gilboa, 2005). To say that mediated communication with foreign publics has been affected by the development of information technology is an understatement. When messages travel with the speed of light, for example, foreign policy statements and events have instant global resonance. In this instance, the media scholars' objective is to understand the new role(s) that media assume in international relations and to identify a theoretical model that can explain how media coverage influences foreign public opinion vis-à-vis American foreign policy.

In general, the media's influence on public diplomacy has mostly been portrayed as one-way communication with foreign publics. Scholars have shown that in the past public diplomacy was mostly made possible by employing international broadcasting, which became the main tool of executing mediated public diplomacy (Entman, 2008; Gilboa, 2004, 2005; Soroka, 2003). This approach to public diplomacy was predominantly used during the Cold War and aimed to inspire foreign publics to act

against rulers in the authoritarian regimes of the time (Fortner, 1994; Laqueur, 1994; Rawnsley, 1996). During the Cold War, international broadcasters such as the BBC World Service, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, participated in disseminating news, information, cultural fare and, directly and indirectly Western values to audiences living in communist states. The main purpose of these international broadcasters was not only to help contain and defeat Communism, promote democracy, and expose foreign publics to American values (Clune, 2004), but also to preserve their roles as instruments and determinants of foreign policy (Rawnsley, 1996). Today, they continue to play what they hope is a major role in winning the hearts and minds of foreign audiences in authoritarian regimes such as Iran, Afghanistan, or Iraq. Although shortwave radio is the dominant mode of distributing the signals of international broadcasters, there are now many other technologies involved: FM, television, the Internet, and satellite (Price, 2003).

In addition, scholars observed that public opinion also contributes to a successful practice of public diplomacy, and that the correlation between journalistic framing and public opinion could also become a major tool in formulating foreign policy (Clune, 2004; Gilboa, 2005; Entman, 2005; Nisbet, Nisbet, Scheufele, & Shanahan, 2004; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). In an attempt to connect foreign policy, media, and public opinion, Entman (2008) posited the cascading network activation model. The model pertains strictly to mediated public diplomacy and suggests that the activation of pro-United States frames in foreign media is limited to media and those nations that have a positive degree of cultural congruency with U.S. political culture. In countries whose cultures may be incongruent to that of the U.S., "skillful mediated public diplomacy should have

some potential for yielding greater representation to the U.S. government's frames" (Entman, 2008, p. 96), and therefore, a more sophisticated approach to public diplomacy is needed. The author explained,

> According to modern public relations theory, organizational goals are best accomplished through symmetric rather than asymmetrical communication – active engagement and empathy with audiences, rather than simply making pronouncements to them. Analogously, the goals of mediated public diplomacy might better be conceived not as promoting unconditional support of the United States, but rather a *mutual* understanding. (Entman, 2008, p. 100)

Entman (2008) suggested that the cascading network activation model presents only an initial conceptual clarification on how to penetrate foreign communication channels, and asserts that his model represents only one step towards the development of a theory-driven public diplomacy field.

International relations scholars' and public diplomacy practitioners' approach on public diplomacy scholarship

Public diplomacy practitioners[1] and international relations (IR) scholars have been looking for ways to improve the practice of public diplomacy around the world and learn from experiences (Dizard, 2004; Gregory, 2006a, b; Hocking, 2005; Hoffman, 1968; Malone, 1988a, b; Nye, 2004; Riordan, 2004; Ross, 2002, Wedge, 1968). One point of agreement among practitioners and IR scholars is that the new diplomacy approaches cannot continue on the 'one structure fits all' approach, but rather "they must be tailored for the requirements of a given country" (Riordan, 2003, p. 134). In this context, the role of state actors will be not only be to solely pass on their country's

[1] Jönsson C. and Hall, M. (2005) found that the majority of the published work has been written by practitioners or by diplomatic historians.

foreign policy messages, but "to be as much as catalysts and coordinators as implementers." (Riordan, 2003, p. 134). This author noted,

> The promotion of ideas and values, or national images, cannot be the responsibility of one body alone, state or non-state. It must be a collaborative effort by all aspects of civil society, state, and non-state actors alike, and all levels of governance. This reinforces the need for a more collaborative and open style of governmental diplomacy and policy making. (Riordan, 2003, p. 133-134)

Indeed, after analyzing in much detail the now defunct U.S. Information Agency, Dizard (2004) arrived at the same conclusion. The more effective approach to public diplomacy programs is to reshape public diplomacy operations to meet the exigencies of the information-age realities, while integrating overseas information and cultural factors into the "complex pattern of U.S. international interests" (Dizard, 2004, p. 229-230). Dizard suggested that to promote U.S. interests and values, the implementation of medium to long-term approaches to political issues is most effective. Examples of medium to long term approaches could be libraries, book publishing, institutional support for exchange programs; whereas the daily routine is identified as short-term activities. In the same vein, Wilson (1996) noted,

> It is important for practitioners to devote some time to identifying and building relationships, or they will forever be caught in the reactive mode of addressing immediate problems with no long-term vision or coordination of strategic efforts. (p. 78).

The theoretical foundation of public diplomacy, as well as the fundamental expertise of a practitioner are described in an early work by Wedge (1968, p. 44) who identified the professional diplomat as the international communicator, given "his functions of representation and negotiation." As the author noted, what is necessary to progress in "this vital field of public diplomacy," would include the "refinement of useful

theory and techniques, and problem-solving study in specific cases of communication difficulty" (Wedge, 1968, p. 44-45). Further, this author envisioned that the theoretical foundation of the field of public diplomacy would result from a collaborative relation among all social disciplines that could advance the field,

> As in the development of medicine or engineering, such a profession would draw on a variety of scholarly and scientific resources and mobilize them to specific practical purposes. It would recruit concepts, methods, and even personnel from relevant fields; anthropology, history, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology, philosophy, the technology of opinion measurement, and the new profession of public relations are among those which have already made distinct contributions. (Wedge, 1968, p. 43)

Malone (1988) also noted the need for a theoretical foundation that would fit with the new public diplomacy. The author further affirms that even though public diplomacy has become the complementary means through which foreign policy interests are pursued, "its unfortunate effect has been to make it harder to think logically about how these programs can best be managed" (Malone, 1988, p. 4). Malone's (1988) affirmation suggests that a theoretical foundation would advance the field of public diplomacy toward a management function and would give practitioners a "logical" understanding of the management aspect of public diplomacy programs.

Scholars have recently concluded that identifying the missing link between the theory and practice of the new public diplomacy requires a totally different mindset (Melissen, 2005; Hocking, 2005). The missing link are not the people "who always mattered to diplomats" (Melissen, 2005, p. 24); the new mindset recognizes that public diplomacy programs are achieved not for the foreign publics, but with the engagement of the foreign publics, "diplomacy *by* the people" (Hocking, 2005, p. 32).

In this context, both public diplomacy practitioners and international relations scholars have proposed a number of theoretical assumptions: Manheim's (1994) "strategic public diplomacy" model founded on theories of strategic political communication; the holistic "public diplomacy chain" approach identified by Leonard and Alakeson (2000); the "dialogic-paradigm of public diplomacy" proposed by Riordan (2005); and the "network model" proposed by Metzl (2001), Hocking (2005), and Zaharna (2007). The common element in these theoretical approaches is that they can take place only through the promotion of communication, collaboration, and trust. Hocking (2005, p. 38) also identified "catalytic diplomacy," as the "form of communication that acknowledges that a range of actors has the capacity to contribute resources to the management of complex problems." Public diplomacy, in this instance, is identified as a strategic management function, which requires practitioners to sit at the policy table and participate in the foreign policy process (Fitzpatrick, 2004). The role of the diplomat is consequently "refined as that of facilitator in the creation and management of these networks" (Hocking, 2005, p. 41).

These diverse theories or models reinforce the need for a new theory that would help practitioners understand the management function of public diplomacy, a function that involves the management of networks, based on relationships and promoted through dialogue and trust.

Public relations approach on public diplomacy scholarship

On the other hand, public relations scholars viewed the similarities between international public relations and public diplomacy and found that public relations theories and practices applied to public diplomacy could advance the field of public

diplomacy (e.g. Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2010; Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005; L'Etang, 1996; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006; Wang & Chang, 2004; Wang, 2006; Yun, 2006).

Overall, the public relations scholarship on public diplomacy looks into the common strategies between the two professions and analyzes the image-building function of governmental activities in the international arena. In this case, the international public relations activities of an organization are transferred to government activities and are analyzed from "a skills-based approach to public relations, suggesting strategies and tactics for improving public diplomacy efforts, without really challenging the dominant framework that continues to drive public diplomacy efforts" (Dutta-Berman, 2006, p. 103).

Public relations and public diplomacy practitioners have increasingly observed the transformation of public diplomacy from a mere tool of foreign policy into a strategic management function that revolves around the fundamental idea of building long-term relationships with targeted foreign publics (Ehling, 1992; Fitzpatrick, 2007; Manheim, 1994; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2004). In order to build long-term relationships with foreign publics, public diplomacy practitioners agree on the need to move toward a dialogic-based public diplomacy, and affirm that a thoughtful dialogue is essential in building mutual understanding (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, Malone, 1988; Riordan, 2004). Public relations scholars assert that the dialogic concept is included in the public relations vocabulary and reflects "an important step in understanding how organizations can build relationships" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 21).

Both international relations and public relations scholars have acknowledged the pitfalls of seeing media as a tool for foreign policy, since it can damage a country's credibility in communicating with foreign publics (Melissen, 2005). The author noted that if public diplomacy is used as a foreign policy tool, "it exposes public diplomacy to the contradictions, discontinuities, fads and fancies of foreign policy" (Melissen, 2005, p. 15). Further, if public diplomacy is too closely tied to foreign policy objectives, it runs the risk of becoming a failure when foreign policy itself is perceived to be a failure" (Melissen, 2005, p. 15; Brown, 2002). A country's public diplomacy works best if and when it is build on trust and credibility, and not when it acts as cleaning crew after the implementation of bad policies abroad. In an address delivered to the Institute of World Affairs, Fitzpatrick (2004) suggested that public diplomacy must have a seat at the policy-making table to ensure that the public implications of decisions and actions are considered in the early stages of policy development. Referring to the ways of improving United State's image abroad, Fitzpatrick (2004) noted,

> Public diplomacy shouldn't be an antidote for bad policies and practices. Public diplomacy officials shouldn't be called to fix things after negative foreign opinion reaches a critical state. They should be part of the foreign policy process – there to interpret the international environment and counsel the president and Congress on the public implications of policies and practices under consideration. They should be there to help execute policies and programs in ways that respect and value foreign citizens and their views. (p. 1)

Consequently, even though public diplomacy practitioners will always focus on the interests and policies of the country they represent, they should employ two-way communication and engage in open dialogue in order to build long-term relationships that help implement their country's policies. Further, because two-way communication includes both listening and understanding, they are as important as engaging in a dialogue

with the aim to create meaningful communication between official agents and foreign publics. Hence, meaningful communication is essential in building and maintaining relationships that aim to execute successful public diplomacy.

According to Clune (2004), for a country to be successful in its public diplomacy, it must use a mix of mass communication and interpersonal channels, depending on the best way to reach different audiences. Public diplomacy must be multidimensional and flexible, as well as strategic and consistent. The public diplomacy of one country in the targeted country should be developed regardless of the sponsoring country's foreign policy and "should be in tune with medium-term objectives and long-term aims" (Melissen 2005, p. 15).

It would be inaccurate, however, to say that public diplomacy efforts should have a strictly relationship-base approach in which all participants are equally affected. One particular aspect that caught the attention of both public relations and international relations scholars is the imbalances of power between countries. This imbalance of power among countries provides different perspectives to public diplomacy in relationships with the aforementioned concepts of dialogue and collaboration. As Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 207) noted, the adoption of relationship management as the theoretical foundation of public diplomacy "would help reconcile the seemingly contradictory notions of using public diplomacy strategies based on dialogue and mutuality to enhance one nation's power over other nations and peoples." In today's international relations and public diplomacy practices, scholars also identified that two important concepts, such as the reputation and credibility of nations, play pivotal roles in building and maintaining long-term relationships (Nye, 2004). In addition, Cowan and

Arsenault (2008) viewed that monolog, dialogue, and collaboration are all essential public diplomacy tools, and the selection of each tool in the execution of successful public diplomacy will largely depend on the public diplomacy practitioners who will be able "to engage in their craft" only after an understanding of the consequences of each approach.

Justification for choosing Romania

The empirical work of this dissertation is centered on U.S. public diplomacy initiatives in post-Communist Romania during 2000-2008. The rationale for choosing Romania is both subjective and objective.

The researcher was born in Romania and came to the United States 10 years after the 1989 revolution that toppled Romania's communist regime. The investigation of U.S. public diplomacy practices in Romania was prompted by the lack of public diplomacy studies that focused on countries that were once behind the Iron Curtain.

The objective reason for choosing Romania of the poll of former communist countries is Eastern Europe has its foundation in the ascension of Romania to the European Union (EU) on January 1, 2007. Today, Romania is not only a full member of the EU, but also has actively pursued a policy of strengthening relations with the West in general, after the fall of Communism, more specifically with the U.S. Furthermore, Romania's rapid progress in modernizing its armed forces and its contributions to allied peacekeeping and other military operations has garner much appreciation and an invitation to join the Alliance in 2002. Romania was the first country to adhere to the NATO Partnership for Peace program. Romania officially became a member of the

North Atlantic Treaty Organization on March 29, 2004 after depositing its instruments of treaty ratification in Washington, DC. Romania hosted President Bush's final NATO Summit April 2-4, 2008. The venue symbolized the expansion of the Alliance from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and set new goals for years to come. Romania has been actively involved in regional organizations, such as the Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative (SECI) and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, and has been a positive force in supporting stability and cooperation in the area.[2]

Of all the countries in Eastern Europe, Romania has played an important role in the region. First, Romania was an atypical member of the Warsaw treaty, because it did not allow Soviet Union to deploy its troops within the Romanian's territory, and did not participate with military forces to the alliance. Second, in the years following the fall of Communism, Romania played a relevant role as a mediator among the warring parties in the conflicts in Yugoslavia. Third, in the more recent years, Romania has proven to be a key U.S. ally in the war on terror[3], and again, in 2003, Romania proved to be an atypical member of the EU, when it joined the U.S. in the war in Iraq[4]. This triggered another controversy that led the U.S. Secretary of Defense at the time, to make the controversial

[2] Available online at the U.S. Department of State website http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35722.htm Retrieved on April 5, 2009

[3] Romania was a helpful partner to the allied forces during the first Gulf War, particularly during its service as president of the UN Security Council. Romania has been active in peace support operations in Afghanistan, UNAVEM in Angola, IFOR/SFOR in Bosnia, KFOR and EULEX in Kosovo, and in Albania. Romania also offered important logistical support to allied military operations in Iraq in 2003 and, after the cessation of organized hostilities, has been participating in coalition security and reconstruction activities. Romania is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which it chaired in 2001. Available online at the U.S. Department of State website http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35722.htm Retrieved on April 5, 2009

[4] Other Eastern countries that joined the U.S. in the war in Iraq have withdrawn their forces over time. These countries are: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland. The current deployment in Iraq is: the United States, The United Kingdom, Romania, and Australia.

statement of "old" Europe, when he referred to the European countries that did not support the 2003 invasion of Iraq, specifically France and Germany:

> You're thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe. If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the center of gravity is shifting to the east. And there are a lot of new members. (Donald Rumsfeld, *Washington Post*, January 2003)

The United States and Romania have established and continued bilateral relationships for over a century. The following section investigates the diplomatic relationships and focuses on initiatives that today could be categorized under public diplomacy practices.

The United States -Romanian diplomatic relations

The U.S.-Romanian diplomatic relations began around mid-19th century. Today, "the U.S.-Romanian bilateral relationship has matured into a strategic partnership that encompasses a wide range of political, military, economic and cultural ties"[5]. Heringthon (2005) noted:

> America's support of Romania gave Washington a new ally, an ally in a geostrategically important area, who could be of service to the United States. By bordering on the Black Sea, Romania is an abutter of the former Soviet Union. And while the new Russia is certainly less aggressive than its predecessor, Moscow's history includes a large dose of imperialism and expansion. Her Black Sea location with its port at Constanta, enables Romania to support America's military interests in the Mid-East as a holding area for troops and material. Bucharest is looked to be a bulwark against drug trafficking, prostitution and slavery coming from Ukraine and Moldova to Western Europe. Romania is also seen as an island of stability in a Southeastern Europe torn by ethnic rivalry. Her cordial relations with Serbia, her peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, her involvement with the Stability Pact, and her good relations with Bulgaria and Hungary makes her, as [former president, Emil] Constantinescu said, "an anchor" in a sea of potential unrest. (p. 10)

[5] "In celebration of 125 years of U.S.-Romanian diplomatic relations" (2006, p. 1) available online at http://www.usembassy.ro/ Accessed on February 27, 2009.

However, U.S.- Romanian relations were not always as smooth as they are today, and that is the result of the Romania's absorption into the Soviet block after World War II. Romania ended up a member of the Warsaw Pact, established in 1955 as a response to the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Finally after 42-plus years, Romania was the only country in the Communist block to eradicate Communism through a bloody revolution in 1989.

History also shows that Romanians have always looked up to Americans, and made efforts to gain their friendship. In his work of the U.S.-Romanian relations Harrington (2005, p. 17) viewed the extent and magnitude of Romania's efforts to gain the friendship of America, and called Romania "an island of stability in a Southeastern Europe torn by ethnic rivalry. As noted by this author, "in return, although after years of uncertainty, America has found a future, long time partner" in Romania (Harrington, 2005, p. 18).

The following examples illustrate how even under times of political distress, both countries made efforts to show the respect they had for each other. The first example dates back to 1956, when Romania was under direct military and economic control of the Soviet Union. In his speech delivered at the University of Maine in August 1959, Robert Thayer (1959), the U.S. Minister to Romania in 1956 described the effect of the visit of three American athletes at an International track competition that took place in Bucharest.

> The day of the track-meet arrived and so did Willie Williams, a colored boy who had broken the world's record for the 100-meter dash; young Gotowski, the great U.S. pole-vaulter; and Ernie Shelton, a high jumper. Into a stadium full of 100.000 Rumanians, the athletes from all over the world marched behind the flag of their country. There were team s from France, Germany, and Belgium, and as they came in [a]n alphabetical order the crowd politely applauded their entrance and their march around the stadium. It was a colorful spectacle, the Rumanians

> have a wonderful sense of color and drama – there were unusual flags and flowers and bunting everywhere – with bands, and the crowd was gay. Suddenly the American flag appeared through the archway of the stadium, borne by Willie Williams, with Ernie Shelton behind him. Gotowski's pole-vault event was the first and he was already warming up – only two young athletes were representing America – by far the smallest of the teams which had marched in.
> There was a moment of dead silence as the flag and the two boys appeared – and then, every man and woman in the stadium was on his feet, and a mighty roar of greeting came from the throats of 100,000 Rumanians. They waved and yelled during the entire progress of these boys around the track. It was the first time they had been able to show their feelings toward our country without fear of reprisal. When the Soviet team came in a few minutes later behind the red flag of Communism, a flutter of polite had-clapping was all that they received.
>
> The presence of these Americans and their enduing performance and contact with the Rumanian people thereafter did more to give the lie of the false stories in the Rumanian radio and press about America than hours of counter radio and tons of literature could ever have done. (Thayer, 1959, p. 742)

Bilateral relations improved in the early 1960s, and cultural, scientific, and educational exchanges were initiated[7]. Despite political differences, the high level contacts between U.S and Romanian leaders continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and even included a visit from President Nixon in 1969.

Still, the public diplomacy literature shows that during the Cold War, the traditional public diplomacy from the West toward the countries behind the Iron Curtain was mainly one-sided, with the information moving through international broadcasting (e.g. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty). The typical communication was comprised of messages and information delivered to the masses living under Soviet influence, but "there was no effort to create a dialogue and listen to the interests and whishes of the message's recipients" (Gilboa, 2006, p. 719). During the Cold War, public diplomacy meant international broadcasting via short-wave radio transmissions in the language of

[7] "In celebration of 125 years of U.S.-Romanian diplomatic relations" (2006, p. 5). Available online at http://www.usembassy.ro/ Accessed on February 27, 2009.

the targeted publics in specific communist countries. Whether they were successful or not in the rest of the Soviet block is not the focus of this investigation, but the following example is illustrative for Romania. Dizard (2004) noted,

> Richard Nixon's 1969 visit to Romania – the first presidential visit to a Communist country – was another strategic project. The local propaganda ministry was totally unprepared to deal with the event. I had been assigned temporarily to Bucharest to handle media details for the visit. When I met with the chief of the Romania foreign office's press bureau, he asked me how many media correspondents would be covering the event. A half dozen? A dozen? In the Romanian official experience, such coverage normally involved the local correspondent from RASS, the Soviet press agency, together with a few Western newsmen stationed in Bucharest. When I informed him that we estimated there would by upwards of a hundred reporters accompanying Nixon, he blanched. After some polite chitchat, the meeting ended and I never saw him again. We proceeded to make our own media arrangements for the visit.
> The government-controlled newspapers in Bucharest limited their announcement of the Nixon visit to a short notice buried in the back paged, with no details of the schedule. However, the Voice o America and other Western broadcasters provided full details in the days before the presidential party arrived. One result was that tens of thousands of Romanians lined the road from the airport to cheer the Nixon motorcade. (Dizard, 2004, p. 162)

Despite the fact that the political relations remained strained throughout this period, the U.S. worked to maintain contacts through cultural and educational exchanges[8]. According to the website for the American Cultural Center in Romania, the *American Library* in Bucharest, which was established in 1972 by the U.S. Information Service, offered a window to American culture, but Romanian were already familiar with the writing of Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, and Bret Harte who were translated and published in Romanian at the end of nineteenth century[9]. After War World II, visits by preeminent artists such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Dave Brubeck, and Arthur

[8] "In celebration of 125 years of U.S.-Romanian diplomatic relations" (2006, p. 7) available online at http://www.usembassy.ro/ Accessed on February 27, 2009.
[9] Ibid. (p. 4)

Rubinstein brought American music directly to the Romanian people[10], while the most preeminent Romanian artists traveled and performed in the United States. Romanian athletes such as gymnast Nadia Comaneci and tennis player Ilie Nastase, as well as Romanian's decision to participate in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics generated positive publicity for Romania in the United States.

Throughout more than 150 year of diplomatic relationships between the U.S. and Romania, America realized that by supporting Romania in its domestic and international endeavors, it would gain a friend and an unwavering ally. Harrington (2004, p. 17) noted, "Washington gained a friend, a country that looked to America for leadership and support, at a time when much of the world was questioning America's goals." Despite the Communist political regime and the economic hardship that overwhelmed Romanians, the image Romanians have of United States remained strong over time. Harrington (2004) narrates a touching story written by Cornel Nistorescu and published in his weekly editorial in *Evenimentul Zilei*[11]. The story captured the nation's feelings toward Americans after watching the destruction of the Twin Towers on television. Together with the entire Romanian nation[12], Nistorescu saw the volunteers who appeared to help, give blood, and raise money for those who had lost loved ones. He asked, "What unites Americans in such a way?…I thought things over, but I reached only one

[10] Ibid. (p. 7)
[11] *Evenimentul Zilei* is one of the leading newspapers in Romania, and its name means "The event of the day." The first issue was published on June 22, 1992.The newspepr is based in Bucharest, the Romanian-language daily has a paid daily circulation of 110,000. Nistorescu is one of the three co-founders.
[12] Including myself. And, as I write today, the images I saw on television that afternoon (in my home country, Romania) are still vivid in my mind, as well as the reactions and sentiments of friends and family around me watching the collapse of the two towers on multiple television channels. As we all wanted to learn more about the circumstances of the terrible events, the printed editorials and the television transmissions were the main sources of information available at the time.

conclusion. Only freedom can work such miracles. If this image can remain true, America has a long time friend, no longer a pariah, but a partner" (Harrington, 2004, p. 17).

Today, the United States and Romania espouse mutual sentiments of friendship. The highly developed diplomatic relations between the two countries are reiterated in a letter from Foreign Minister Ungureanu to Secretary of State Rice (August, 31, 2005)[13],

> During the Cold War years, when Romania was locked up behind the Iron Curtain by a dictatorial regime, the friendship and deeply shared aspirations between our two peoples, hidden as they were at times, did not fade away. [It] is a partnership built on dialogue between our countries' political, military and business establishments, between our peoples and our elites. It is the expression of a joint commitment to defend common interests and common values.

The importance of this study

This dissertation aims to patch the theoretical gap in public diplomacy by testing the applicability of the relationship management theory of public relations to public diplomacy. In order to understand how diplomats establish and maintain relationships with foreign publics, this study adopts Fitzpatrick's (2007) relational approach public diplomacy practices.

The originality of this study is two-fold. First, under the relational paradigm, this study proposes a framework of public diplomacy practices between any two countries in the world. This framework is built on seven relational dimensions identified in this study as image, reputation, trust, credibility, dialogue, communication, and relationship. These relational dimensions are unique to each civil society and thus, can help scholars and

[13] Excerpt from the manuscript "In Celebration of the 125 years of U.S.-Romanian Diplomatic Relations" available online at http://www.usembassy.ro/ Accessed on February 27, 2009.

practitioners understand the particularities of the relational approach to public diplomacy practices around the world.

Second, this study establishes that under the relational paradigm the goal of public diplomacy is the management of long-lasting relationships between members of two countries, with the aim to create hubs of networks in the countries of interest. To better understand how practitioners engage with foreign populace, this dissertation proposes a new model for the relationship management process of public diplomacy. This newly proposed model reveals how diplomats engage with foreign populace with the ultimate goal to manage networks of relationships in foreign countries. In addition, this model reveals that U.S. public diplomacy practices and diplomats' functions abroad are contingent to each country's level of development when compared to the United States.

Furthermore, this is the first study that tests the applicability of the relationship management theory of public relations to public diplomacy and from this perspective answers Fitzpatrick's (2007, p. 187) call to participate in building a research agenda that "demonstrates the potential for public relations theory of relationship management to advance contemporary thought and practice in public diplomacy."

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

TOWARD A RELATIONAL PARADIGM OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

As noted by Signitzer and Coombs (1992) public relations theories in communal association with international relations theories could create a new theoretical foundation for the field of public diplomacy. These authors viewed possible convergences between the two academic fields beyond governments' involvement in international public relations:

> "How nation-states, countries or societies manage their communicative relationships with their foreign publics remains largely in the domain of political science and international relations. Public relations theory development covering this theme has yet to progress beyond the recognition that nations can engage in international public relations." (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992, p. 138)

Signitzer and Coombs (1992, p. 146) called for expanded public relations theory-based empirical studies to further explore and facilitate this theoretical convergence, which could bring the two fields closer together, rather than progress "in quite different intellectual and academic settings and in near isolation from each other." However, as the literature in both fields reveals, only a small number of researchers have followed this proposed line of research.

Public relations endeavors toward a theoretical foundation for public diplomacy

L'Etang (1996, 2006), Yun (2006), Dutta-Bergman (2006), Kruckenberg and Vujnovic (2005), and Fitzpatrick (2007, 2009) are among the few public relations scholars who noted the applicability of various public relations theories as into public diplomacy scholarship and practice.

L'Etang (1996, 2006) analyzed the possible overlap between the conceptual and theoretical assumptions in international relations and the dominant theoretical frameworks in public relations. The author sought to illustrate the ways in which 1) public relations can learn from the already existing theoretical literature in international relations, and suggested that international relations theories associated to symmetry could inform the theoretical framework of public relations; and 2) public relations scholarship could contribute to possible theory building in public diplomacy. L'Etang (2006) observed that public diplomacy as a component of international relations lacks a theoretical foundations and focuses only on the practical approach as "it contributes to specific political decisions or crises, and is treated descriptively rather than analytically" (p. 381). As noted by L'Etang (2006, p. 381), public diplomacy is not "seen as a field of study in itself, but as a technique used to achieve certain ends." Hence, L'Etang (2006) proposed a two-fold theoretical framework that has its foundation in Grunig's and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations. The first theoretical model advances theories of international relations that pertain to symmetry and could expand the theoretical literature in public relations; and the second theoretical model advances the four models of public relations, and how in communal association with relevant theories in international relations could become the theoretical foundation for public diplomacy.

Yun (2006) also responded to Signitzer's and Combs' (1992) call for empirical research, and tested the applicability of the Excellence Study of public relations proposed by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002), in the field of public diplomacy. Yun (2006) surveyed foreign embassies in Washington in order to understand how they practice and manage public diplomacy. Further, this author measured foreign diplomats' behavior and

management, and found that "public relations frameworks are transferable to conceptualizing and measuring public diplomacy behavior and excellence in public diplomacy" (Yun, 2006, p. 307).

From a different perspective, Dutta-Bergman (2006) analyzed the applicability of international public relations to public diplomacy. The author proposed a culture-centered approach based on dialogue and mutuality as an alternative to one-way public diplomacy based on asymmetric enforcement of one's country's values and culture. The author viewed dialogue as the main tool of a culture centered-approach of public diplomacy, noted that "the value systems of the participants provides the basis for the dialogical processes that is built on mutual trust between the participating actors" (Dutta-Bergman, 2006, p. 119). The author further suggested that culture-centered approach to public diplomacy builds on community-based strategies of public relations that explore trust, mutuality and participatory methods of communication. Dutta-Bergman (2006, p. 121) proposed for a shift in studying public diplomacy from a relational perspective, and noted that the celebration of relationship between cultures "shifts the role of public diplomacy theorists and practitioners from informing and persuading to understanding, dialoguing, and relationship building.

From the perspective of community-building strategies of public relations, Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2005, p. 296) analyzed the U.S. public diplomacy and proposed that U.S. should reject propaganda or market-oriented advocacy and "practice true public diplomacy, which should rely, not only on political theory and the theories of international relations, but also on theories and models of public relations that are based on two-way communications and community-building." These authors suggested that the

best way to serve organizations, societies, and nations is by employing community-building strategies and programs in both public relations and public diplomacy (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1998; Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005).

In an all-encompassing analysis of the conceptual overlaps between public relations and public diplomacy Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 187) demonstrated "the potential for the public relations theory of relationship management to advance contemporary thought and practice in public diplomacy." Fitzpatrick (2007) explained,

> "Under a relational paradigm, the new public diplomacy's central purpose would be relationship management, which would encompass all public diplomacy activities – short term/long term, reactive/proactive, information/advocacy/ engagement/policy advisement, etc. […] All public diplomacy efforts would be designed to – and judged by – whether they contribute to the establishment and maintenance of positive supportive relationships with strategic publics." (p. 208)

Public relations scholars who viewed public diplomacy from a relational perspective (Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2007) suggested that the focus of public diplomacy should be the relationship between cultures and underlined the role of dialogue and engagement in a process of mutual understanding between peoples of different cultures. As Duta-Bergman (2006, p. 122) noted, the "relationship-based public diplomacy is the very idea that both participants in the relationship can be equally affected."

The relationship management theory of public relations

Public relations scholars noted that one of the indisputable convergences between public relations and public diplomacy is reflected in the concept of relationship. In the field of public diplomacy this concept has advanced to the center of discussion,

regardless whether scholars perceive it: 1) as the foundation of scholarship and practice (Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2009), or 2) as a long-term function that is based on building relationships with the desired publics (Gregory, 2005; Nye, 2008; Riordan 2005). Therefore, a discussion about the relationship management theory, as well as the relational paradigm of public relations is necessary in order to build the argument of theory transferability from public relations to public diplomacy.

Ferguson (1984) was the first to introduce the idea that relationships should be the foundation of scholarship and practice in public relations. Since then, public relations scholars (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997, 2000; Botan & Taylor, 2004; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Huang, 2001; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, 2000; Ledingham, 2003) have transformed the discipline by recognizing this new direction, and by concentrating the "focus public relations research on the core function of relationship building" (Botan & Taylor, 2004, p. 652).

Over the past decade, public relations scholarship has shifted from a communication function responsible with coordinating communication, generating product publicity, managing media relations, and enhancing internal employee communication (Cardwell, 1997) to a management function responsible with initiating, nurturing and maintaining relationships between organizations and publics (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994; Ferguson, 1984; Ledingham, 2003; Toth, 2000). As noted by Bruning and Ledingham (1999),

> "Developing mutually beneficial relationship-building initiatives can help practitioners to move the practice of public relations away from a journalistic approach, in which the placing of publicity is the primary focus, into a management approach, in which initiation, development, enhancement, and

> maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships toward the ultimate goal of key public members' loyalty is of utmost importance." (p. 164-167).

Further, public relations scholars (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000; Bruning & Ledingham 1999; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Huang, 2001) argued that public relations role in an organization and society is to help build long-term relationships with strategic publics.

This view of the public relations practice represents a conceptual change from persuasion and manipulation through communication messages to a management function by "combining symbolic communication messages and organizational behaviors to initiate, build, nurture, and maintain mutually beneficial organization–public relationships" (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000, p. 87). Ledingham and Brunig (2000, p. xiii) noted that placing the relationship management as a paradigm for public relations scholarship illustrates "the essence of public relations – what it is and what is does or should do, its function and value within the organizational structure and the greater society." Bruning and Hatfield (2002, p. 5) viewed that the relationship management "has emerged as a paradigm that can demonstrate accountability and illustrate the ways in which public relations activities contribute to revenue streams and the overall functioning of the organization." This new perspective in scholarly and practical applications has led Huang (2001, p. 270) to note that the relationship management "has emerged as an important paradigm for public relations scholarship and practice."

In an early attempt to categorize public relations scholarship developments that have their foundation in the relational perspective, Ledingham and Bruning (2001) found three expanding categories: models of organization-public relationship (Broom et al.,

1997; Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000; Bruning & Ledingham, 2002; Gruning & Huang, 2000), relationship dimensions (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998, 1999; Huang, 2001; Kim, 2001), and application of relationship management to public relations practice (Bridges & Nelson, 2000; Coombs, 2000).

Kruckeberg and Starck (1988, p. 145) suggested that "public relations is best defined and practiced as the active attempt to restore and maintain a sense of community." Similarly, Ledingham (2001, p. 286) noted that "when public relations is viewed as the management of the organization-public relationship, the effectiveness of that management can be measured in terms of relationship building." Ledingham (2001, p. 292) further noted that public relations can function as community builder, "when shared interests are the basis for public relations initiatives grounded in a commitment to mutual benefit."

As noted by Bruning and Hatfield (2002, p. 14) public relations practitioners should "develop relationship management programs in which key public member input is actively solicited and incorporated into the strategic planning process." In a similar view, Bruning (2002, p. 46) suggested that "effectively managed relationships can influence key public member perceptions, attitudes, evaluations, and behaviors." Bruning, DeMiglio, and Embry (2006) found that relationship building activities provide a competitive advantage and that organizations engaged in the relationship building process should a) highlight those programs in comparison with competitor organizations, b) communicate their uniqueness and advantages, c) underline the organization's ongoing relationship building programs. The authors further emphasized the importance of mutual benefit in an organization-public relationship through activities that focus on

community relations and "doing so will help the organization compare favorably against competitors and assist public relations practitioners in making the case that effective relationship building activities provide a competitive advantage" (Brunnig et al., 2006, p. 38).

Public relations research showed that competitive advantage is maintained through mutual benefit based on successful management of organization-public relationship and the understanding of "what must be done in order to initiate, develop and maintain that relationship" (Ledingham, 2001, p. 288). As noted by Ledingham (2003) public relations scholarship build around the relational perspective has been explored in the context of various public relations functions such as public affairs, community relations, issues management, crisis management and media relations. This author observed that the relational management perspective charges public relations with a balancing act between "the interests of organizations and publics through the management of organization-public relationship" (Ledingham, 2003, p. 181).

Ledingham (2003) was the first to propose relationship management as a general theory of public relations:

> "Effectively managing organizational-public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics." (p. 190).

As a relative new theory of public relations, the relationship management theory has become the foundation of a growing body of scholarship. Bruning, Castle, and Schrepfer (2004) examined Ledingham's (2003) relationship management paradigm focusing on three pillars: 1) quality organization-public relationships are linked to the organizational outcomes such as increased levels of satisfaction and loyalty; 2) the

organization and publics need to establish communal interests and shared goals; and 3) public relations practitioners' necessity to "suggest ways that interacting organizations and public may enhance mutual understanding and benefit" (Bruning, Castle, & Schrepfer, p. 443). The authors noted that building relationships between organizations and publics should be critical to the bottom-line functioning of the organization. As noted by Bruning, Castle, and Schrepfer (2004 p. 444-5), relationship building takes time and "different needs are manifest at different points in time," but when organization-public relationships is managed effectively, it "positively affects the attitudes, evaluations, and behaviors of key public members."

Bruning, Langenhop, and Green (2004) stated that when organization–public relationships were managed effectively, practitioner action could be linked to outcomes such as (a) relationship building with key publics (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 1997; Taylor, Kent & White, 2001), (b) enhanced reputation (Bridges & Nelson, 2000), (c) satisfaction (Bruning & Hatfield, 2002; Bruning & Ledingham, 1998, 2000; Bruning, Castle & Schrepfer, 2004), (d) behavioral intent (Bruning, 2000; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; Bruning, Langenhop & Green, 2004), and (e) actual behavior (Bruning, 2002). Further research drawing form interpersonal communication, relationship marketing literature also showed that trust, commitment, local or community involvement and reputation are central to organization-public relationship (Kim, 2001).

Public relations researchers (Bruning& Ledingham, 1999; Huang, 2001) explored the types and dimensions of organization-public relationships. However, Ledingham and Bruning (2000, p. xi) noted that because of the lack of measurement the field of public relations was "more often characterized by what it does than what it is." Broom, Casey,

and Ritchey (2000) noted that an incomplete definition of relationship hindered the development of compelling operational measures of the organization-public relationship. Broom et al. (2000) noted:

> "The formation of relationship occurs when parties have perceptions and expectations of each other, when one or both parties need resources from the other, when one or both parties perceive mutual threats from an uncertain environment, or when there is either a legal or voluntary necessity to associate." (p. 17)

As noted by Ledingham (2008), the relational perspective in public relations is the result of five developments including,

> "(a) the recognition that the field of public relations should focus on relationships; (b) a reconceptualization of public relations as a management function with the need for strategic planning and evaluation; (c) the construction of models of organization-stakeholder relationships; (d) the distillation of relationship attributes from the literature of interpersonal relationships and related disciplines; and, (e) the development of organization-stakeholder relationship scales to measure relationship quality." (p. 243)

Further, Ledingham (2008, p. 226) viewed that public relations growing body of relational-grounded scholarship has increasingly focused on " (a) the nature of organization-public relationships; (b) the dimensions that drive them; (c) the complexity of organizational public exchange; and (d) the ways to initiate, nurture, and maintain mutually-beneficial relationships between organizations and the publics they serve."

Bruning and Lambe (2008) stated that public relations scholarship that employs the relationship management perspective has been successfully applied in business to business (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000), crisis management (Coombs, 2000), lobbying and health public relations (Wise, 2007), employee relationships (Wilson, 2001), issues management (Bridges & Nelson, 2000), community relations (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000), and global public relations (Kruckeberg, 2000), and has shown to positively affect

key public member attitudes, evaluations, and behaviors in education (Bruning, 2002), banking (Bruning & Hatfield, 2002), and public utilities (Bruning, Castle, & Schrepfer, 2004).

In the light of Ledingham's (2003) relationship management theory, Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 205) observed that, "effective public relations produces supportive public relationships that are built on trust and accommodation created through genuine dialogue produced by two-way symmetrical communication that is designed to accommodate dual interests." Fitzpatrick's (2007) definition of the relationship management theory advances the discussion to the concept of dialogue, which has been identified by public relations scholars as one major aspect of organization- public relationships.

The dialogic theory of public relations

The public relations literature reveals continuous scholarly debate about the role of dialogue in the context of relationship building process between an organization and its desired publics. Ledingham and Bruning (2000) analyzed the role of dialogue in the organizational contexts, and found that an organization's actions and communication with its public builds a symbolic and behavioral relationship between the two. The authors suggested that an organization accomplishes its mission only when it "engages in action and communication that facilitates a sense of openness, trust, commitment, involvement and investment" with its key publics (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000, p. 65). Similarly, Kent and Taylor (2002) found that the organization-public relationship viewed from a dialogic perspective cannot transform an organization to "behave morally or force an organization to respond to publics," but rather could only hold an organization

accountable to its commitment to dialogue and "acceptance of the value of relationship building" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 30). The concept of dialogue is deeply rooted in the relational communication theory, and "its inclusion in the public relations vocabulary is an important step toward understanding how organizations can build relationships that serve both organizational and public interest" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 21).

Kent and Taylor (2002, p. 24) were the first ones to propose the dialogic theory of public relations and to argue that the dialogue changes "the nature of the organization-public relationship by placing emphasis on the relationship." These authors identified five possible directions for dialogue in the context of organization-public relationship: 1) mutuality, which describes the reciprocal satisfaction of parts engaged in a relationship; 2) propinquity, which describes the spontaneity of an organization's interactions with its key publics; 3) empathy, which describes the supportiveness and confirmation of public goals and interests; 4) risk, which describes an organization's willingness to interact with individuals and publics on their own terms; and 5) commitment, which describes "the extent to which an organization gives itself over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in its interactions with publics" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 24) .

Taylor (2002) viewed that in order to have mutual beneficial organization-public relationships, public relations practitioners should employ a dialogic approach to the relationship building process. As noted by Taylor, Kent and White (2001) dialogue might replace the concept of symmetry by underlining the importance of relationships. Organization-public relationships based on a dialogic approach require organizations to actively solicit information from their public members and listen to, process, and respond to those messages. Further, Kent and Taylor (2002) noted that an organization-public

relationship that is build on dialogue used in an ethical manner, can build relationships that serve both organizational and public interests. Kent and Taylor (2002) suggested:

> "Skills that are necessary include: listening, empathy, being able to contextualize issues within local, national, and international frameworks, being able to identify common ground between parties, thinking about long-term rather than short term objectives, seeking out groups/individuals with opposing viewpoints, and soliciting a variety of internal and external opinions on policy issues." (p. 31)

Botan and Taylor (2004, p. 652) placed dialogue under the relationship theory, and further suggested that "the shift to relational communication and dialogue as frameworks for public relations reflects the transition to a co-creational perspective." As noted by these authors, this trend from a functionalist to a management perspective focuses on the long-term relationships between publics and organizations.

Bruning, Dials, and Shirka (2007) suggested that the best way for organizations to facilitate relationships is through a dialogic process, which engages the public during communication. The authors recommended that once the dialogue is established, practitioners should "design programmatic initiatives and sponsorships that are responsive to the expectations expressed" by the publics. Bruning et al. (2007, p. 29) further noted that a "relational approach, grounded in dialogic principles, requires that the organization tailor communication and organizational action to specific recipients based upon relational needs."

Existing theories in public diplomacy

The practice of public diplomacy, confirms the congruency between the concepts of relationship and network, which allowed public diplomacy scholars to propose the

network model of public diplomacy (Metzl, 2001; Hocking, 2005; Zaharna, 2007) that is based on Manheim's (1994) concept of *strategic public diplomacy*.

Hocking (2008) argued that Nye's "policy of attraction" does not always work, and proposed a new approach to the practice of public diplomacy, the network public diplomacy. Hocking's (2008, p. 64) model is different than the traditional hierarchic model, because it "recognizes the importance of policy networks in managing increasingly complex policy environments through the promotion of communication, dialogue and trust." The author affirmed that the diversity of membership and non-hierarchical quality of network diplomacy would allow public diplomacy to "promote collaboration and learning, and speed up the acquisition and processing of knowledge" (Hocking's, 2008, p. 64).

Zaharna (2007) also proposed a network approach to public diplomacy, which she named the network communication approach to public diplomacy. In Zaharna's (2007, p. 216) view, the new global communication era has created a shift "from a focus on information as a product, to communication as a process" with an emphasis on message exchange instead of message content. As seen by this author, three main developments have generated a continuous change in the political and communication outcomes. The first one pertains to communication, which in global communication era is "diffused into a multi-polar, multi-dimension context" (Zaharna, 2007, p. 216), which reveals governments' loss in persuasive power. The second development identified by this author was culture, which has emerged as a new important factor in international relations able to shape the production of information by each government's political ideology. The third development pertains to the emergence and proliferation of

communication players and technologies, contexts in which "new players are the non-state actors, including business corporations, NGOs and prominent individuals" (Zaharna, 2007, p. 216). The author observed that noted that this dynamic transfer "from information as a product to communication as a process" is significant because in the world with instantaneous global communication, "those who master and facilitate message exchange command communication power" (Zaharna, 2007, p. 217).

Zaharna (2007) suggested that the network communication approach is characterized by three dimensions including network structure, network synergy, and network strategy. The author viewed the network structure as the most efficient organizational structure for message exchange, which given the connection between the individuals are flexible, adaptable and allow for faster flow of information. According to Zaharna (2007, p. 219), the second component, network synergy is "the result of relationship building and incorporating diversity." The author viewed that the relationship-building component of public diplomacy falls under the network synergy, and can occur on both an internal a well as an external level. Internally relationship-building activities revolve around "exchanging emails or voicemail, volunteering or competing tasks, [in order to] help to transform a group of individuals into a team", while externally, relationship-building activities "add to the wealth of resources and expand the networks" (Zaharna, 2007, p. 219). As noted by this author, the third dimension of the network communication model pertains to how networks use and exchange information. Zaharna (2007, p. 220) viewed that "information is the lifeblood of networks," and in order to maintain networks, information is used to "co-create credibility, identity and master narratives." The author explained, "a local story can evolve into a global master

narrative, carrying with it the soft power that it needs to attract and persuade across national and cultural borders" (Zaharna, 2007, p. 219).

Among other scholars that analyzed the role of relationships in public diplomacy, Leonard and Alakeson (2000) suggested a holistic approach to building a public diplomacy chain. Leonard's and Alakeson's (2000) proposed: 1) an innovative holistic *public diplomacy chain* among other suggestion for the new diplomacy practice, 2) *partnership* with the emphasis on "creating the infrastructure for dialogue and networks;" 3) *communicating with mass audiences* with the emphasis on "building communities of interest;" 4) *facilitating* with the emphasis on "global relations" possible by "building deep relationships with the entire communities" (p. 88-92). These authors explained, "to unleash the diplomatic potential of our schools, companies, NGOs, communities and local authorities, the government needs to act as a facilitator" (Leonard & Alakeson, 2000, p. 92); 5) *Connecting the foreign and domestic debates*, and 6) *tracking and monitoring* public diplomacy activities. Overall, Leonard's and Alekson's (2000) public diplomacy chain model is based on the concept of partnership and dialogue, where the concept of partnership is essential in disseminating messages to audiences, and the concept of dialogue is pivotal in building multilateral coalitions set on long lasting relationships built on mutual benefit.

Metzl's (2001) suggested that the advancement toward a network public diplomacy is largely based on the flexible nature of networks in opposition to traditional hierarchies. Metzl (2001) explained:

> "A shift in conceptual models must also be accompanied by new relationships among government foreign policy actors, as well as between these actors and global constituencies. Governments need to nurture their own internal networks

> and link them to broader networks outside of government. Governments must expand their thinking to embrace these external networks." (p. 22-25)

Although a large number of scholars emphasized the importance of two-way communication in the practice of successful public diplomacy, Riordan (2003) was the first one to propose a dialogic paradigm of public diplomacy. Riordan (2005, p. 180) explored the role of public diplomacy in international relations, and noted that "the new security agenda requires a more collaborative approach to foreign policy, which in return requires a new dialogue-based paradigm for public diplomacy." The author suggested that a successful dialogue-based public diplomacy requires a more humble approach to others views and engagement in open dialogue. Riordan (2005) observed,

> "A successful public diplomacy must be based not on the assertions of values, but on engaging in a genuine dialogue. […] Public diplomacy must engage in dialogues with a broad range of players in foreign civil societies. This requires a more open, and perhaps humble, approach, which recognizes that no one has a monopoly of truth or virtue, that other ideas may be valid and that the outcome may be different from the initial message being promoted." (p. 189)

Riordan (2003) also identified the importance of relationship-building in public diplomacy. As noted by this author, public diplomacy has changed its attention from merely communicating with foreign people, as in megaphone diplomacy to managing complex networks of relationships. The author viewed that "as international relations increasingly operate not at a single inter-state level but through complex, multi-level and interdependent networks, governments and their diplomats must learn to operate in these networks" (Riordan, 2005, p. 190).

Can the relational paradigm of public relations fill the theoretical gap in public diplomacy?

Overall, the literature revealed that public relations scholars who investigated the overlaps between public relations and public diplomacy and international relations scholars who explored the new development in the practice of diplomacy noted that public diplomacy has increasingly embraced the concept of relationship. Among the public diplomacy scholars who adopted the concept of relationship central to public diplomacy practices, Gregory (2005, p. 5) defined public diplomacy as "the development of relationships between people, groups, and institutions." Similarly, among the public relations scholars who responded to Signitzer's and Coombs' (1992) call, Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 210) noted that "the application of relational concepts in public relations [will] stimulate discussion and debate regarding public diplomacy purposes and practices."

This dissertation aims to advance public relations theory in two ways. First, this study is the first one to tests the transferability of the relationship management theory to public diplomacy and second, proposes a new model for the relationship management theory in public diplomacy. The adoption of the relational paradigm in the field of public diplomacy opens an attractive line of research that would allow public diplomacy scholars and practitioners to better understand the relationship management process of public diplomacy. Testing the relationships management theory in public diplomacy is an important undertaking, which could yield important knowledge to further advance practitioners' practices from mere communication to establishing meaningful relationships with key publics, and managing long-lasting relationships with the aim to create hubs of networks in the countries of interest.

Chapter III: LITERATURE REVIEW

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND THE DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Defining public diplomacy

Although the number of scholarly works that analyzes public diplomacy has increased in recent years, few scholars have agreed upon a universal definition of public diplomacy. Because of the breath of this umbrella term, most definitions define public diplomacy by what it does especially focusing on its main practical functions and purposes. In this context public diplomacy scholars and professionals have tried to define public diplomacy "seeking to capture a new perspective on the discipline" (Fisher & Bröckerhoff, 2008, p. 3). While the majority of definitions for public diplomacy show a relative agreement among scholars and professionals with regard to the strategic dimensions of the new public diplomacy, they also illustrate a dire need for an understanding of the meaning of public diplomacy (Fitztpatrick, 2007; Melissen, 2004; Tuch, 1990). Hence, in order to advance the discipline and understand its new developments, Melissen (2005, p. 11) challenged scholars to advance scholarship by broadening public diplomacy sphere, instead of clinging on to past images or try "to make a forward projection of historical practices into the present international environment."

Public diplomacy scholarship and practice has followed various paths it followed over the past few decades. In a comprehensive analysis of the field of public diplomacy, Fitzpatrick (2009) identified 154 definitions of the term and broad categorizations

contingent of the various functions and goals of the public diplomacy practice. As noted by Fitzpatrick (2009), public diplomacy has six functions including advocacy/ influence, communication/information, relational, promotional, political, and warfare/propaganda. According to the author, three of these functions are emerged as major developments.

1) Over half (51%) defined public diplomacy in terms of its function of *advocacy and influence*

2) Over 25 percent defined public diplomacy as a *communication and informational function*

3) Less than 10 percent defined public diplomacy as having either a *relational* or a *promotional* function

In addition, the majority of scholars viewed public diplomacy as a governmental funded activity (80%) toward the foreign publics/citizens/elites (70%) (Fitzpatrick, 2009).

As noted by Fitzpatrick (2009), the public diplomacy mandate of a country in another is to build a nation's relationships with a foreign public. Fitzpatrick (2009) suggested that public diplomacy should be investigated from a relational perspective, where public diplomacy is the "management of a nation's relationships with foreign publics," while the ambassador is the official responsible for "managing a country's relations with foreign publics" (Fitzpatrick, 2009, p. 1).

Advocacy/Influence function of public diplomacy

Gullion (1966) was the first scholar to define public diplomacy in terms of its functions of advocacy and persuasion. As noted by the author, public diplomacy represents "the means by which governments, private groups and individuals influence

the attitudes and opinions of other peoples and governments in such way as to exercise an influence on their foreign decisions" (Gullion, 1966). Malone (1988a, p. 7) also viewed public diplomacy as a means to communicate "directly with foreigners to affect their thinking in ways that are mutually beneficial with the goal to influence behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens." The author suggested that "by communicating with the people of other countries we may be able to affect their thinking in ways beneficial to ourselves, and even to them as well" (Malone (1988a, p. 2-3). In today's international realm, Henrikson (2006, p. 10) suggested that public diplomacy is more than persuasion and that "governments are using public diplomacy as a tool of regime change, rather than as a way to simply influence foreign publics."

Communication function of public diplomacy

Wedge (1968, p. 45) named the new profession of public diplomacy a "scientific profession of cross-cultural communication analysis" which represents the "kind of social invention" which would "permit us to better understand and deal with other peoples in terms of their own national psychology without losing sight of our own." Malone (1988) also noted that "a world that is shrinking requires better communication and mutual comprehension if nations are able to survive and prosper" (p. 7). Further, Tuch (1990) viewed public diplomacy in terms of *improving international understanding and relations*. As noted by Tuch (1990, p. 3) public diplomacy is "a government process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and policies."

Relational function of public diplomacy

Even though a number of scholars acknowledged the relational component of public diplomacy practice, only few defined the concept in these terms. Nye (2009), for example identified the relational dimension as one of the tree functions for public diplomacy in today's international environment: a) the daily communication, b) the strategic communication, and c) the relational function. Melissen (2005, p. 21) noted that public diplomacy characterizes "the relationship between diplomats and the foreign publics with which they work," while Malone (1988) suggested that public diplomacy represents public activities abroad, primarily in the fields of information, education and culture.

Ross (2002) underlined the strategic component of the relational perspective and believed that public diplomacy plays an important role in building and maintaining relationships between nations "in order to develop support for those same strategic goals" (p. 75). Similarly, Sharp (2005, p. 106) noted that public diplomacy is "the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented." Public diplomacy pursuit in international arena can also be seen as a governmental function to maintain and improve a country's image, credibility, and reputation, as well as "the quest to build symbolic capital on the world stage" (Bustamante & Sweig 2008, p. 247).

Melissen (2005) also viewed public diplomacy both in relational and promotional terms:

> "Public diplomacy is about promoting and maintaining smooth international relationships. In an international environment that is characterizes by multiple links between civil societies and the growing influence of non-governmental

> actors, public diplomacy reinforces the overall diplomatic effort in the sense that it strengthens relationships with non-official target groups abroad." (p. 21)

The term public diplomacy encompasses a multifaceted concept. As noted by Fitzpatrick (2009), the public diplomacy literature reveals various definitions and categorizations for public diplomacy practice including (1) to advance the national interest and values; (2) to influence knowledge, attitudes and actions of foreign publics; (3) to improve international understanding/relations; (4) to influence policies and actions of other nations and foreign leaders; (5) to advance foreign policy; (6) to influence international environment of opinion; (7) to advance national security; (8) to enhance national image; (9) to achieve communication/discourse; (10) to increase soft power; (11) to promote democracy.

Hansen (1989, p. xii-xiv) recognized that "despite the growth in interest and knowledge of public diplomacy, it is not necessarily better understood. On the contrary, the term has been misused in recent years because its meaning is elusive." Similarly, Melissen (2004, p. 118-120) acknowledged that "there is so much confusion" about what public diplomacy means, and that "there is very little scholarly literature about public diplomacy." In this vein, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the scholarly investigation that aims to advance public diplomacy as a theoretical field.

Types of public diplomacy

The most extensive analysis of the practice of public diplomacy comes from the field of international relations (Cull, 2008; Melissen, 20045; Nye, 2008; Ross, 2003). Cull (2008, p. 35), for example, identified a basic taxonomy of types of public diplomacy with their respective activities: (1) *listening* which included activities such as *targeted*

polling; (2) *advocacy* represented through *embassy press relations*; (3) *cultural diplomacy* expressed through *state-funded international art tour*; (4) *exchange diplomacy* represented by *two-way academic exchange*; and (5) *international broadcasting* through activities carried-on by *the foreign-language short-wave radio broadcasting*. Cull (2008) also categorized the *time/flow* of *information/infrastructure* in public diplomacy, and identified the types of activities pertaining to each time frame. For example, (1) *listening* and (2) *advocacy* were seen as both *short and long term* activities; (3) *cultural diplomacy* comprised *long term* activities; (4) *exchange diplomacy* represented *very long term* diplomacy; and (5) *international broadcasting* pertained to *medium term* activities (Cull, 2008, p. 35).

Nye (2008) identified three dimensions for the current public diplomacy: (1) *daily communication*, (2) *strategic communication*, and (3) *developing lasting relationships*. According to this author, while all these dimensions play "an important role in helping to create and attractive image of a country" (Nye 2008, p. 102), the last two yield more strategic and aim long-term outcomes. Effective communications strategies require good policies, because effective public diplomacy requires two-way communication that involves listening as well as talking. The author believed that "long standing friendly relationships may lead others to be slightly more tolerant," because friends "will give you the benefit of the doubt more willingly" (Nye, 2008, p. 103).

Public diplomacy scholarship reveals a broad investigation into the types of diplomacy and the actors involved in the public diplomacy process. If diplomacy was at its origins a government-to-government function (traditional diplomacy), in today

international environment has increasingly become a government-to-people or people-to-people activities. The literature reveals three types of public diplomacy:

1) Traditional diplomacy, which represents the channel of communication between governments (Riordan, 2003), and therefore, consists of official engagements between foreign governments in order to advance the national interests and goals. Scott-Smith (2007) defined the official government-to-government activities as a formal set of relationships between state representatives with the purpose of managing international relations.
2) The government-to-people diplomacy, which is viewed as a public diplomacy process (Riordan, 2003; Scott-Smith, 2007), in which people in a country are pursued in order to advance the interests and values "by organizations and individuals abroad," and "to enhance the involvement of publics in other countries with one's own country" (Melissen, 2004, p. 121).
3) People-to-people diplomacy, or citizen diplomacy, which is defined as a subset of public diplomacy, and it differs from government-to-people diplomacy in the way that it extends well beyond a government's efforts to communicate with foreign audiences. Citizen diplomacy is based on the concept "that in a democracy, people have the right, even the responsibility to help shape foreign relations."[23]

The underlining idea of citizen diplomacy is that everyone can be a citizen diplomat and contribute to mutual understanding among cultures, by building long standing friendly relationships not only initiated by governments toward foreign people, but by people toward people Nye's (2008). The Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy define

[23] Coalition for Citizen Diplomacy Website, http://www.coalitionforcitizendiplomacy.org/

people-to-people diplomacy or citizen diplomacy as a volunteer activity and citizens who interact with people from other countries (such as business representatives, government officials, academics, organizational leaders, and students) should be encouraged to view themselves as citizen diplomats.

According to Hughes (2005), diplomacy can no longer be just government-to-government activities, but rather must be government-to-people because in today's international relations, diplomats "have to think about winning over not only government officials but also the people to whom those leaders are ultimately accountable"[24]. In the light of government-to-people public diplomacy, Hughes (2007) proposed that the practice of public diplomacy should be based on a set of four strategic pillars: engage, exchange, education, and empowerment. Similarly, Ross (2003) suggested a conceptual definition for government-to-people public diplomacy based on six pillars of public diplomacy: (1) policy advocacy, (2) context, (3) credibility, (4) tailored messages, (5) alliances and partnerships, and (6) dialogues and exchanges. The common denominator in Ross' (2003) categorization is the concept of communication, which according to the author, should be delivered in a proper context with the commitment to sustain dialogue and engagement.

Cowan and Cull (2008) referred to public diplomacy as an umbrella term that describes ways and means by which states, associations of states (i.e. EU, UAE), and non-state actors (a) understand cultures, attitudes, and behavior; (b) build and manage relationships; and (c) influence opinions and actions to advance their interests and values.

[24] Karen Hughes, The Mission of Public Diplomacy, Testimony at confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, http://www.state.gov/r/us/2005/49967.htm.

Of all the functions and dimensions identified in the public diplomacy literature by Fitzpatrick (2009), Nye (2008), Cull (2008) and Ross (2003), this study investigates public diplomacy from its relational perspective and its goal of engagement through mutual dialog, by means of understanding and collaboration with foreign publics that flourish into long-term relationships.

Dimensions of the relationship management process: conceptual convergences in public relations and public diplomacy

International public relations is the "planned effort of a company, institution, or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the publics of the other nations" (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992, p. 137). These authors were the first ones to recognize the commonality between the public relations and public diplomacy objectives and instruments, and since then, only a handful of public relations scholars (Kunczik, 2003; Fitzpatrick, 2007; L'Etang, 2007; Huang, 2001; Yun, 2006) participated in the scholarship that investigated the relationship between the two areas.

As noted by Signitzer and Coombs (1992) the relationship between international public relations and public diplomacy lays in the communal concepts that both propose and in the similar tools that both employ to achieve their similar objectives, and consequently, the two fields are in a natural process of convergence. In their search for conceptual convergences between public relations and public diplomacy, Signitzer and Coombs (1992) were in agreement with Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1985) who identified the public relations objectives as the information exchange, reduction of misconceptions, the creation of goodwill, and the construction of an image.

Kunczik (2003) found that public diplomacy is a form of public relations carried out by a country directed at a foreign audience. As noted by the author, public diplomacy objectives are similar with those of public relations, and the only difference is that they are pursued in a different context and with different actors. Public diplomacy comprises a plethora of public relations strategies and tactics that are played out only in a different realm than what is considered to be the traditional realm of public relations public diplomacy (Kunczik, 2003). Similarly, Wang and Chang (2004) found that public diplomacy is in many ways a form of international public relations. In addition, the researchers suggested that public diplomacy and public relations are similar because, 1) they both seek to reach out targeted foreign audiences with the aim of maintaining and managing images on behalf of their clients, and 2) in doing so, they both use similar strategies and methodologies (Wang & Chang, 2004).

As noted by Signitzer and Coombs (1992, p. 145) both public diplomacy and international public relations can benefit if they learn each other' strengths and adapt them to their "of dealing with foreign publics." The authors suggested that while public relations may lack the strategic thinking for foreign policy making, public diplomacy could learn from public relations to develop tactical excellence. However, only in later years, public relations scholars have responded to the Signitzer's and Coombs' (1992) call to develop a research agenda in public diplomacy based on empirical research with a public relations theoretical foundation (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Kunczik, 1997, 2003; Lee, 2006; Wang, 2006; Wang and Chang, 2004; Yun, 2006; Zaharna, 2001). Yun (2005, p. 13) noted that "after a decade [from Signitzer and Coombs (1992)], little advancement

has been made to determine what public relations concepts and theories are transferable and applicable to the study of public diplomacy."

Relational dimensions

This study answers Signitzer' and Combs' (1992) call and proposes a framework of public diplomacy build on seven relational dimensions transferred from the field of international public relations. Further, these relational dimensions will create both a communal vocabulary and a premise of research in public diplomacy that adopts a public relations approach. These concepts are, (1) *image* (Avenarius, 1993; Botan, 1993; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985; Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Grunig, 1993; Wan & Shell, 2007; Kunczik, 1997, 2003; Lee, 2006; Wang, 2006; Wang and Chang, 2004; Mor, 2007; Zhang, 2006); (2) *reputation* (Coombs, 2000; Kunczik, 1997, 2003; Schreiber, 2008; Wang & Chang, 2004; Yang, 2005; Fombrun, 1996); (3) *trust* (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Huang, 1997, 2001; Hutton, 1999; Hung, 2000; Kunczik, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; L'Etang, 2006; Rawlins, 2007); (4) *credibility* (Gass & Seiter, 1008; L'Etang, 2006); (5) *communication* (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000; Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2009; Botan & Taylor, 2004; Wang & Chang, 2004); (6) *dialogue* (Botan, & Taylor, 2004; Kent & Taylor, 2002); (7) *relationships* (Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2009).

The following analysis looks at the literature in both public relations and international relations in order to explore the relationships between the concepts in the context of public diplomacy. Moreover, this analysis aims to broaden the foundation of conceptual convergences between public relations and public diplomacy.

1. The concept of image

In public relations, the concept of image has been used to define various notions (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985), but most of all, the term has been used by practitioners to signify the impressions an organization has among its publics, such as stakeholders, or target audiences. Scholars that defined image from the audience's perspective argued that the image of an organization is based on the impressions that people perceive of it, and therefore it can be defined as "an audience-determined construct" (Wan & Schell, 2007, p. 26). On the other hand, scholars have defined image as a self-standing, man-made attribute. According to Grunig (1993) public relations practitioners are considered to be "image makers" and therefore, organizations that emphasize "image in their public relations practice, focus on creating illusions rather than engaging in substantial behavioral relationships" (Wan & Schell, 2007, p. 26).

Boulding (1956) observed that the conception of an image involves not only the present image but also aspects of the past, as well as future expectations. Similarly, Avenarius (1993) described the concept of image and its dimensions with terms related to concepts such as: knowledge, attitudes, schema, and stereotypes. Botan (1993) applied the typology of communication to the creation of image, and found that scholars that see public relations as a one-way communication define image in terms of managing a public's perceptions, whereas scholars that see public relations as a two-way communication define image in terms of subjective knowledge, based on what one believes to be true.

The concept of image is often qualified by evaluative adjectives such as good, poor, positive, or negative. Meech (2006) advanced Williams' (1976) view, who defined

image from the perspective of one-way asymmetric process. According to Meech (2006) the perceptions formed over time, are most of the time the only palpable form of reality for the majority of people.

> [Image] is in effect a jargon term of commercial advertising and public relations. Its relevance has been increased by the growing importance of visual media such as television. […] This technical sense in practice supports the commercial and manipulative process of image as "perceived" reputation or character. (Meech, 2006, p. 130-131)

As noted by Kunczik (2003, p. 412), public relations literature does not provide a "clear definitive distinction between such concepts as attitude, stereotype, prejudice, or image." In an attempt to delineate these concepts, the author defined image as a constant dynamic component, "something created by its possessor" (Kunczik, 1997, p. 39); and, prejudices and stereotypes as more stable concepts that are created by the environment over long periods of time. Therefore, images of nations can be understood as "harden prejudices, as they are not suddenly there, but often have grown in long historical processes" (Kunczik, 1997, p. 39). Applying these concepts to the field of international public relations, Kunczik (2003, p. 413) observed that international public relations' main goal is "to establish [or maintain] positive image of one's own nation, or to appear trustworthy to other actors in the world system."

Just as personal image counts in social interactions and personal relations, and a positive organizational image matters in the business environment, so too most countries recognize the value of a positive national image in international relations (Kunczik, 1997; Lee, 2006; Wang, 2007). Wang and Chang (2004) noted that the main international public relations' goal is to improve a country's national image through media-oriented

diplomatic events. The authors found that at the foundation of diplomatic activities lays the development and promotion of favorable perceptions and attitudes between countries.

In the field of international relations, scholars also noted the important roles that the *management of impressions* and *image projection* play in the process of persuading foreign public opinion through public diplomacy (Mor, 2007). As noted by Dutta-Bergman (2006) public diplomacy "is the effort of a nation-state to build an image with the public of another state" (p. 104). Hertz (1982) observed,

> "It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that today half of power politics consists of image-making. With the rising importance of publics in foreign affairs, image making has steadily increased. Today, hardly anything remains in the open conduct of foreign policy that does not have a propaganda or public relations aspect." (p. 187)

Mor (2007) viewed public diplomacy from the perspective of self-presentation and impression management, and suggested that public diplomacy is a form of self-presentation, through which just like individuals, states aim to influence foreign publics perceptions with respect to their identity. Similarly, Brown (2002) noted that public diplomacy aims to create complex, multi-dimensional, long-lasting impressions and memories about a country abroad. The author suggested that these images are aimed to counterbalances the simplistic images promoted at one particular moment in time through the variety of international media.

Both international relations and public relations scholars investigated the role media play in the practice of public diplomacy, especially in the creation of a country's image with a foreign public (Manheim, 1994; Wang & Chang, 2004, Zhang, 2006). In this vein, Manheim (1994) introduced the concept of *strategic public diplomacy* to

describe the events created by head-of-state visits in foreign countries. As noted by this author, these visits create press coverage, which can further contribute to the improvement of the host country publics' perceptions toward the other country's image. Wang and Chang (2004, p. 11-13) found that head-of-states visits on foreign lands are not only "an indispensable vehicle of international events," but also that, "such media-oriented events, if done effectively, can transform a nation's image, smooth differences, and dispel distrust between nations and peoples."

Manheim (1994, p. 39) conducted a comprehensive analysis of image-management in time of war, and found this public diplomacy function to be "the real smart weapon of the Gulf conflict." According to this author, image-management efforts required broad coordination within and across governments, which in the end resulted in the most fascinating effort of *strategic public diplomacy* to help mobilize support for the war. The author noted that during the Gulf conflict, the efforts at the political level corroborated with public relations efforts played key roles in the implementation of policy. In the present international environment, diplomacy has continually adapted to change in the international system, and "for decades, foreign ministries and other government agencies have focused on projecting national images for a variety of purposes" (Hocking, 2008, p. 63).

2. The concept of reputation

As noted by Kunczik (1997), in the field of international relations, the concepts of image and reputation can be traced back to France's Cardinal Richelieu who considered that by distributing publications appropriately biased in foreign countries, especially in

Rome, would create the foundation for a good reputation and a positive image Richelieu believed that one [person or country] who had a good reputation in Rome had a good reputation in the world (Kunczik, 1997).

Public relations scholars suggested that building a good reputation and positive image is accomplished both abroad and at home (Kunczick 2003; Wang & Chang, 2004). While Kunczik (2003) believed that the production of one's country's national image starts at home, Wang and Chang (2004) found that the practice of international public relations in a foreign country plays an important role in a nation's effort in building global reputation. Further, Wang (2006, p. 94) found that national reputation is all about having a good name in the world of nations, and noted that "managing national reputation is not just about projecting a certain national image but rather negotiating understanding with foreign publics."

Public relations scholars have noted the difficulty of defining the concept of reputation, since the perception of a person, company, or country lies in the eye of the beholder (Schreiber, 2008). Furthermore, many scholars have indicated the difficulty of delineating reputation from image and either used the concepts interchangeable (Verčič, 2000), or defined reputation as the sum of the images constituents have of an organization (Fombrun, 1996). Bromley (1993, p. 9-11), who identified 122 definitions for the concept of reputation, suggested that "reputations are determined not only by the actions of an entity but also by the consequences of those actions, the entity's relationships and qualities, and by many other factors."

Yang (2005) advanced Broomley's (1993) work and proposed two key aspects of organizational reputation related to organization-public relationships:

> "1) An organization needs to manage long-term quality relationships with publics rather than attempt to manipulate reputation for short-term outputs; and 2) Organizational reputation is 'superficial' and can be easily damaged by organizational behaviors, whereas organization-public relationships are more endurable than organizational reputation since cultivating quality relationships requires long-term devotion from both parties." (Yang, 2005, p. 84)

On the other hand, in the field of international relations Nye (2008, p. 100) viewed that a country's reputation which always mattered in the world politics has become "even more important than in the past" in today's international relations. The author noted that image and reputation, together with credibility and trustworthiness have become essential components of the armory of a country in the world of international relations, and in communal association with a country's culture, values, and policies represent a nation' *soft power*. According to Nye (2008), the practical application of promoting a positive image of one's country abroad through public diplomacy applications is similar with projecting soft power. Hence, it can be said that "the extent that public diplomacy attempts to influence the perceptions and opinions of the members of the target state with respect to the image of the source [nation], it embodies a form of public relations" (Dutta-Bergman, 2006, p. 104).

3. The concepts of trust and credibility

The concept of trust is considered central to both the fields of public relations and international relations. While for public relations practitioners, trust has always been essential for successful practice (Rawlins, 2007), in international relations, trust has been considered an essential factor in mobilizing resources toward formulating international policy (Kunczik, 2003). In the field of public relations, the concepts of trust, credibility

and communication form the foundation of the main function of public relations: building relationships (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Moreover, as noted by Ledingham and Bruning (1998, p. 58) the concepts of trustworthiness, dependability, and forthrightness are key components of a relationship and refer to "a feeling that those in the relationship can rely on the other,"

The concept of trust has been the central focus for most public relations scholars (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Hung, 2000; Hutton, 1999). Hutton (1999) viewed the practice of public relations, as the management of relationships built on mutual trust, compromise, and cooperation. Hung (2000) found that in for public relations practitioners in international realm, trust is an important element in building a good foundation for relationships. Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, p. 162) analyzed the organization-public relationship indicators and found that "trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment impact the ways in which organization-public relationships are initiated, developed, and maintained." Hon and Grunig (1999) also analyzed the concept of trust, and identified that three important dimensions, integrity, dependability, and competence are essential for satisfactory relationships between organizations and their stakeholders.

The concepts of trust and credibility have also been the central focus for most international relations scholars (Gregory, 2005; Nye, 2008; Ross, 2003). Nye (2008) noted the important role for credibility in maintaining a country's impeccable reputation in the world of nations. The author noted that in today's international relations "politics has become a contest of competitive credibility" where governments compete for their

"country's reputation for credibility" (Nye, 2008, p. 100). In a similar manner, Anholt (2008, p. 41) noted that "a nation's credibility is virtually synonymous with its [image]."

Ross (2003) identified credibility as the third pillar of public diplomacy and stated that because messages reach multiple publics they must be consistent and truthful. Gregory (2005, p. 17) also analyzed the importance of trust and credibility in international relations, and observed that "to build consent for strategies, there must be a basis for trust" in both communications and actions, because "credibility is diminished when words and actions do not match, [and] when statements directed to multiple audiences are inconsistent." Similarly, Wang (2006) also saw that government's credibility and efficacy as the primary communicator can be in jeopardy if the source loses its credibility.

Gass and Seiter (2008) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the concept of credibility in public diplomacy. The authors found that organizational or institutional credibility is a perceptual phenomenon which does not reside in a source rather it is conferred by the audience. As noted by the authors, credibility is situational and contextual specific, and is bounded in the receiver's culture and "since the credibility is in the eye of the beholder, those seeking to project credibility through public diplomacy must adopt an audience-centered approach" (Gass & Seiter, 2008, p. 162).

Further, Gass and Seiter (2008) investigated the concept of credibility as a multi-dimensional construct and identified a number of primary and secondary dimensions. According to these authors, the primary dimensions of credibility in the context of public diplomacy are: 1) expertise, competence, or qualifications that refer specifically to the source, who could be the president or a country's top officials, as well as the media that

carries the message; 2) trustworthiness of the source that carries the message, because trust is a prerequisite for cooperation; and 3) goodwill or perceived caring, of all actors engaged in international relations. As noted by the authors, composure and dynamism were two most important secondary dimensions. 1) Composure, because leaders should be calm, cool, and collected, and "not panicky and easily rattled" (Gass & Seiter, 2008, p. 161), and 2) dynamism for both (a) political leaders for whom it is important to appear energetic, enthusiastic, and animated, and (b) international institutions engaged in public diplomacy.

L'Etang (2006) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between public relations and public diplomacy. The author analyzed the concepts of trust, credibility, and reputation for both public relations and public diplomacy, and found that both fields "deal in trust and use strategies of negotiations and impression management while guarding the reputation of their clients" (L'Etang, 2006, p. 383). As noted by L'Etang (2006), the overlap between public relations and public diplomacy is obvious when both governments and organizations employ the same techniques to explain activities toward their targeted publics. L'Etang (2006) observed,

> "Public relations is profoundly concerned with the establishment and maintenance of the reputation and credibility of client organizations, and this is done explicitly to maintain the client's ability to influence key publics and to be identified by the media as a contributor to debate on particular issues […] governments themselves employ such techniques – though in this case these are sometimes referred to as information or propaganda." (p. 380)

4. The concept of communication

International relations scholars recognize public diplomacy as a communication instrument used in governance, which is "dependent on the practical benefits of truth and

credibility" (Gregory, 2008, p. 276). Fitzpatrick (2009) noted that scholars perceive communication as the most important functions of public diplomacy. For example, scholars defined communication as, 1) a goal for nation-states (Dutta-Bergman, 2006), 2) a function performed by international actors in order to reach foreign publics (Malone, 1985); 3) a process in which governments engage in order to connect with foreign publics (Tuch, 1990); and (4) and instrument employed by governments to influence the opinions and perceptions of foreign publics (Dutta-Bergman, 2006).

Public relations scholars noted that the field of public relations and public diplomacy converge around the concept of communication when communication is viewed as 1) an applied communication function (Botan & Taylor, 2004), 2) a strategic function, when practitioners in both fields public seek to achieve their objective through the use of communication programs directed at societies abroad (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992), and 3) the management of communications between and organization and its publics (Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2009; Grunig & Hunt, 1994; Yun, 2005).

Another commonality in the practice of both public relations and public diplomacy was recognized by Wang and Chang (2004, p. 22), who saw communication as the basis "to build and maintain mutual understanding between nations and cultures," and Fitzpatrick (2007, 2009, 2010) who saw communication as the means to manage successful long-term relationships between two countries. This communal convergence around the concept of communication is even more evident when is compared with Bruning's and Ledingham's (2000, p.159) view of the use of communication in public relations, as to "to initiate, develop, maintain, and repair mutually productive organization-public relationships."

Strategic communication

A number of international relations scholars analyzed the role of strategic communication in the world of international relations (Gregory, 2005; Manheim, 1994; Nye, 2004; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006). As noted by Gregory (2005), a number of scholars and professionals view strategic communication as one of the main instruments for effective diplomacy under the umbrella of public diplomacy, while others, use strategic communication as an umbrella term congruent with a number of activities such as public affairs, public diplomacy, international broadcasting, and open military information operations.

Among the scholars in the first category, Signitzer and Wamser (2006) saw the convergence between public relations and public diplomacy around the concept of strategic communication for both organizations and nation-states, while Nye (2004) identified strategic communication as one of the main dimensions of public diplomacy. Among the scholars in the second category, who considered public diplomacy and strategic communication congruent, Gregory (2005) analyzed the complexity of strategic communication in public diplomacy and the way it relates to the United States security. The author questioned the terminology of strategic communication and investigated whether the term should be used interchangeably with public diplomacy.

> "Public diplomacy and strategic communication can be used analogous to describe a blend of activities by which governments, groups, and individuals *comprehend* attitudes, cultures, and mediated environments; *engage* in dialogue between people and institutions; *advise* political leaders on the public opinion implications of policy choices; and *influence* attitudes and behavior through strategies and means intended to persuade." (Gregory, 2005, p. 39)

5. The concept dialogue

In the field of international relations, public diplomacy communication is a receiver phenomenon, "it is not what one says, but it is what the other hears that ultimately matters" (Ross, 2002, p. 77). In order to achieve mutual understanding, scholars and professionals in both fields noted that effective public diplomacy requires government and private enterprises active in the international realm, to communicate with foreign publics by moving from monologue to dialog" (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008). These authors also viewed that in international situation, dialogue entails exchanges of ideas and information in a reciprocal and multidirectional way.

In the field of public relations, scholars and professionals saw dialogue is not just part of a conversation, but rather, the basis for the formation of a relationship between communicators (Kent & Taylor, 1998). Similarly, in the field of international relations, although one-way communication strategies are important at critical moments and for day-to-day explanations of policy (Nye, 2008), scholars and professionals observed that reciprocal communication is the foundation of lasting friendships between individuals because in public diplomacy dialogue is a way to improve relationships or to increase understanding (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008).

Brown (2002) view dialogue as one of public diplomacy's greatest achievements, because "by maintaining an on-going international dialogue, public diplomacy assures linkages between the U.S. and other nations, even when government-to-government relations are struggling" (p. 9). Similarly, Finn (2003) noted the importance of person-to-person contact and dialogue in winning the hearts and minds of foreign publics. Public diplomacy messages become more sophisticated and subtle when practitioners engage in

"dialogue with a broad range of players in foreign civil societies" (Riordan, 2005, p. 189). Cowan and Arsenault (2008, p. 20) viewed two layers for the concept of dialogue in public diplomacy, one "as a symbolic gesture that emphasizes that reasonable people can find reasonable ways to disagree," and "as a mechanism for overcoming stereotypes and forging relationships across social boundaries."

The concept of dialogue is an important component that lays at the foundation of long-term relationships or networks. International relations scholars view the concept of dialogue specifically from the perspective of building relationships and networks (Melissen, 2004; Metzl, 2001; Riordan, 2003, 2007; Zaharna, 2005). Metzl (2001) noted that the process of dialogue between governments and the population of other countries is the most appropriate instrument to create and develop networks, "this type of broad engagement between societies is more important now than ever before because it builds the human relationships and cross-cultural understanding that are the key component of networks" (Metzl, 2001, p. 84).

Melissen (2004) also placed relationships and dialogue at the basis of public diplomacy practice and viewed dialogue and collaboration at the foundation of public diplomacy practice, as parts in the relationship constantly learn from each other. Similarly, Zaharna (2005) noted the importance of dialogue in the context of networking and its outcomes, and suggested that in today's new stage of global communication the process of networking has replaced persuasion and the strongest, most extensive network would have an advantage when compared with the practitioner with most information. Hence, dialogue is viewed a prerequisite in building networks, which is the main goal in the development of public diplomacy. Davidson (2008) explained,

> "One clear result of the combined forces of globalization and the revolution in communication technology is a change in how people want to interact. They want a conversation rather than a message. People want to challenge and be challenged. Traditional approaches to influencing seem rigid by comparison, […] and can be all too easily dismissed as spin or propaganda, thereby losing credibility and, most importantly, trust. The ability to build networks will be central to the conduct and future development of public diplomacy." (p. 86)

Listening

Most international relations scholars that analyzed the concept of dialogue, referred interchangeably to the concept of listening (Cowan and Arsenault, 2008; Fisher and Bröckerhoff, 2008; Nye, 2008; Riordan, 2005; Ross, 2003). Among them, Riordan (2005) noted that the commitment to dialogue requires a more open genuine approach, which in turn builds credibility. Riordan (2005, p. 189) observed, "if the aim is to convince, rather than just win, and the process is to have credibility, [then] the dialogue must be genuine," because "the effort to convince is set in a context of listening." The importance of listening in international relations is recognized not only by the majority of scholars but also by professionals, who viewed that international actors, including "governments and civil societies will not engage in collaboration if they feel that their ideas and values are not taken seriously" (Riordan, 2005, p. 189). Successful public diplomacy involves listening, which in turn mirrors "genuine interest in the other's perspective" (Fisher & Bröckerhoff, 2008, p. 23; Nye, 2008). Fisher and Bröckerhoff (2008) noted:

> "Listening can sometimes achieve more in changing people's behavior than talking to them. Showing willingness to listen can open up new territory for mutuality. Listening to others shows genuine interest and respect in their matters. This allows relationships to be built on mutual respect and trust. The way an international actor behaves is just as important as the message he sends out." (p. 23)

Cowan and Arsenault (2008) analyzed the importance to be heard by the other in a communication process, and found that the need to be heard represents a universal human characteristic. These authors suggested that the pathways to dialogue lie in finding ways to listen, because "listening can help governments find a better way of articulating policies that might otherwise be needlessly unpopular" (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, p. 19). Ross (2003) placed *dialogue and exchanges* as one of the sixth pillars of public diplomacy, and suggested that a country' society and culture is enhanced if the government is committed to engage in dialogue with the people of another country. The author also viewed that the commitment to dialogue and exchanges corroborated with the process of listening conducts to the avoidance of stereotypes and gives opportunity for feedback.

The literature in both public relations and international relations literature reflect the importance of dialogue and listening as effective tools of public diplomacy. Most scholars agree that to achieve the main goal of public diplomacy, which is to establish and building long-lasting relationships, requires careful listening (Davidson, 2008). As noted by Davidson (2008), the explicit emphasis on the active form of listening generates trust upon which strong relationships and networks can be built. In practice professionals in both fields viewed that in order for relationships to grow, both parts should be willing to share their point of view and identify shared goals through dialogue and receptive listening (Davidson, 2008; Riordan, 2003).

6. The concept of relationship

The literature in both public relations and public diplomacy show that both fields have experienced evolutions from a functional communication approach to a management approach, and more specifically, from one-way journalistic inspired communication model to a two-way dialogic model and a relationship management function (Fitzpatrick, 2007). This is not to say that public relations and public diplomacy are seen as moving in one direction with one definitive dimensional approach. Rather, they are viewed as multidimensional professions that allow for boundary spanning initiatives and approaches.

This section explores (1) the types and dimensions of organization-public relationship in the field of public relations; (2) the potential participants in a relationship in both public relations and public diplomacy; and (3) the similarities between the concepts of relationship, collaboration, and network in the field of public diplomacy.

Types and dimensions of organization-public relationship

Among the public relations scholars that defined the organization-public relationship, Bruning and Ledingham (1999, p. 160) viewed the organization-public relationship as the "state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political, and/or cultural well-being of the other entity." In a similar view, Thomlison (2000, p. 78) defined the organization-public relationship in terms of its management, and suggested that the management of an organization-public relationship "implies the development, maintenance, growth, and nurturing of mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their significant publics."

However, even though public relations practitioners constantly aim to build and maintain organization-public relationships, only few scholars and practitioners have attempted to define such relationships and develop reliable measures of such relationships and their outcomes (Broom, Casey & Richey, 2000; Grunig & Huang, 2000).

Public relations scholars who quantified how organization-relationships influence publics' behavior Bruning and Ledingham (1999) identified a number of dimensions most likely to affect relationships including trust, openness, involvement, investment, commitment, reciprocity, mutual legitimacy and mutual understanding. Further, these authors categorized organization-public relationships as professional, personal, and community relationships. As noted by Bruning and Ledingham (1999, p. 165), a *professional organization-public relationship* describes the effectiveness of an organization to meet customer's needs and demonstrates "organizational willingness to invest financially in the organization-public relationship." A *personal organization-public relationship* focuses on "the organizational actions that build a sense of trust" and "be willing to invest time, effort, and energy into their interactions with key public members" (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 165). The third organization-public relationship, *community relationship* describes the organization's openness, interactions, concerns, and commitments for the communities it serves.

On the other hand, Huang (2001) examined the organization-public relationships characteristics and was the first to introduce the concept of relational outcomes. To define an organization-public relationship, Huang (2001) used four evaluating indicators trust, satisfaction, commitment and control mutuality. This author viewed the

organization-public relationship as the "degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another" (Huang, 1997, p. 61). Further, Huang (2001) noted that *control mutuality* describes the degree of control each party exerts over the relationship through. The author view *trust* as the most critical dimension of the public relations field and the second critical element in an organization-public relationship assessment (OPRA) scale. *Trust* describes the degree of confidence that both parties engaged in a relationship have in each other and their willingness to open themselves to the other party through "symmetrical or ethical communication and two-way communication" (Huang, 2001, p. 67). The third element in Huang's (2001) OPRA scale is *satisfaction*. A noted by the author, relational *satisfaction* is an essential attribute of relationship assessment and describes the degree to which parties engaged in a relationship are satisfied with each other and the relationship between them. The fourth element identified in the OPRA scale is *commitment*. Huang (2001) described relational *commitment* as the extent to which parties involved in an organization-public relationship feel about the others and the relationship itself, and the level of desire to maintain the relationship.

Bruning, Castle, and Schrepfer (2004) also sought to measure publics' perceptions of their relationship with an organization. These authors established and validated the benefits of building effective organization-public relationships by (a) exploring the ways in which organization-public relationships are linked to organizational outcomes such as satisfaction evaluations and behavioral intent, (b) determining what an organization's public suggest would be common interests and shared goals, and (c) suggesting ways that

interacting organizations and publics may enhance mutual understanding and benefit (p. 436). The authors found that one of the keys in an organization-public relationship is to determine what organizations and publics can do to create mutually beneficial interactions over long periods of time, when both organizations and publics alter their needs.

As noted by Ni (2009) other scholars have also tried to measure organization-public relationships such as, (1) the development and refinement of the measurement of relationships (Jo, 2006); (2) the evaluation of the effects of public relations programs on the attributes or intentions of publics (Hall, 2006; Ki & Hon, 2007); (3) the connection between relationship outcomes and reputation (Yang, 2007); or (4) the antecedents and mediator for relationships (Kim, 2007).

Participants in a relationship

Not until long ago, public relations scholars and professionals noted that the ordinary players in a relationship would come from the private sector, and that the government of any country would be considered an extraordinary player in public relations, but somewhat common in international public relations. On the other hand, international relations scholars and professionals noted that in the field of diplomacy, the ordinary players in a relationship would be the official representatives of a country abroad, including the ambassadors and other diplomats and the officials of the host target, while the non-governmental institutions, private companies, or regular citizens were perceived to be extraordinary players. As noted by Melissen (2005, p. 30), the changes of actors in international relations is the result of the growth of civil society and global social movements, which are "changing the character of multilateral diplomacy, as its

intergovernmental credentials are redefined in the light of growing participation by non-governmental organizations."

Gregory (2008, p. 284) also noted that public diplomacy is expanding to "include relationships between state and non-state actors, many with non-territorial identities constructed from class, race, religion, culture, dreams and memories." Over the last decade, public diplomacy scholars and practitioners have constantly observed the increasingly important role non-governmental players have in the field of public diplomacy (Melissen, 2005); Riordan, 2005; Zaharna, 2007).

The congruency between the concept of relationship and those of collaboration and network in the field of public diplomacy

Overall, the international relations literature shows not only an increase emphasis on the concept of relationship and its implications in the practice of public diplomacy, but also its interchangeable use with related concepts such as collaboration and network (Fisher & Bröckerhoff, 2008; Gregory, 2008; Hocking, 2007; Melissen, 2007; Metzl, 2001; Riordan, 2007). Public diplomacy scholars viewed diplomacy as a long-term approach that includes both relationships and collaborations (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008; Hocking, 2005, 2008; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2003; Zaharna, 2007). Cowan and Arsenault (2008, p. 21) defined collaboration as a form of public diplomacy that refers to "initiatives in which participants from different nations participate in a project together." As noted by these authors, collaborative projects are built on dialogue upon which lasting relationships are formed. In a similar context, Riordan (2003) noted that in today's international environment, policy formation is the result of genuine collaborative relationships. Hence, public diplomacy scholars and practitioners suggest that

international collaborations could be considered one of the most important forms of public diplomacy in the promotion of shared policy goals (Cowan & Arsenalult, 2008; Melissen, 2005; Riordan 2003; Ross, 2003).

Gregory (2008) referred to networks and relationships interchangeably and suggested that governments should employ a broader perspective and a more imaginative thinking in their attempt to develop relationships with civil societies of other countries. Lord (2005) also referred to relationships and networks interchangeably and called for the necessity of advancing the relationship model of public diplomacy, in building relationships with individuals. Lord (2005) observed,

> "Identifying and maintaining long-term relationships with key leaders in countries around the world is a massive project […]. However, these networks of relationships are probably more important than the content of individual messages or the success of individual initiatives. They provide the infrastructure through which successful public diplomacy becomes possible." (p. 13-14)

Fisher and Bröckerhoff (2008) used the concepts of networks and long-term relationships interchangeably when referred to public diplomacy. These authors viewed public diplomacy as a range of activities, including listening, facilitation, building networks or long-term relationships. The authors suggested that "long-term networks must engage people on the basis of their priorities, because this creates networks of advocates working in the same direction as the public diplomacy organization" (Fisher & Bröckerhoff, 2008, p. 27).

Davidson (2008) noted that the relationships between individuals from countries that have disengaged their official diplomatic relations could potentially, over generations, act like pre-existent conditions and jump-start the official diplomatic process. Davidson (2008, p. 80) noted "when in the future, diplomatic relations with

these countries become closer, these pre-existing relationships and networks, developed between communities within and beyond their borders, will be available to support the diplomatic process."

Application of the relational paradigm to the practice of public diplomacy

The overlaps between the fields of public relations and public diplomacy emerge when practitioners from both fields focused on building, developing and managing mutual beneficial relationships between the organization/government and audiences in foreign countries. Hence, this work embraces the relational perspective and embarks on a new empirical undertaking in the field of public diplomacy that adopts the relational paradigm.

Public diplomacy literature reveals that scholars see the practice of public diplomacy at least from two perspectives. On one hand, public diplomacy theory and practice continues to revolve around the promotion of one's country's policy, values, and national image (Riordan, 2007). This perspective has placed public diplomacy at the center of international relations where it has become a vital part of diplomacy (Dizard, 2004; Roberts, 2007). Anholt, (2008, p. 30) also noted that with the advance of globalization "national image and reputation have become ever more critical assets in the modern world." Yet, even though national promotion has always been one of the goals of diplomacy, the literature shows that "it has been afforded limited importance in traditional diplomacy" (Riordan, 2003, p. 14).

On the other hand, a new wave of scholarship emphasizes that public diplomacy practices are not just about selling images, but also about the establishment and

development of long-term relationships based on dialogue, and about demonstrating interest in the other side (Melissen, 2004). In this context, "the role of foreign ministry in developing public diplomacy is self-evident, but most public diplomacy is delivered at the front line of the embassy" (Melissen, 2004, p. 125).

Following, the analysis of public diplomacy investigates the applicability of the relational paradigm to the practice of public diplomacy. This investigation aims to understand the way diplomats engage in their role of promoting and managing their country's image and reputation in their daily communication and interactions with the public of a foreign country. The analysis is constructed around the relational dimensions of (1) image and reputation, (2) trust and credibility, (3) communication and dialogue, and (4) relationship and network. Further, this investigation aims to understand (5) the new roles of diplomats in the process of building networks and relationships with the public of the host country.

1. The dimensions of image and reputation under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy

The literature reveals divide. On one hand, journalism and media scholars have proposed the analysis of image and reputation of a country abroad, through the perspective of media effects, by exploring the ways in which its image is portrayed by the media in a foreign country (Entman, 2008; Fortner, 1994; Gilboa, 2001, 2005; Wang 2006). On the other hand, scholars from marketing and international relations have proposed the study of a country's image and reputation in public diplomacy from a branding perspective. However, as noted by Anholt (2008), the literature shows little or no evidence to suggest that private-sector marketing techniques can change national

images or improve a country's reputation with the public of another country. Anholt (2008) explained:

> "National reputation truly cannot be constructed; it can only be earned. Imagining that such a deeply rooted phenomenon can be shifted by so weak an instrument as marketing communications is an extravagant delusion. As Socrates observed, 'the way to achieve a better reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear'." (p. 34)

The images of countries, or as Botan (1993, p. 73) called them, "something we believe to be true" are considered stable concepts that can only be changed over long periods of time, or even generations (Anholt, 2008). Furthermore, because a country's reputation lies in the eyes of the beholder, it is very difficult to change it through marketing techniques (Kunczik, 1997, Schreiber, 2008). As noted by Boulding (1956), images of countries include not only the present image, but also aspects of the past, as well as future expectations. Thus, it would be unlikely that the public of a foreign country would respond positively to a branding campaign that aims "to inspire unwavering respect, loyalty, even love for their [national] brands" (Anholt, 2008, p. 33). Anholt (2008) further explained,

> "Managing national reputation […] is no longer a matter of choice. Countries must either take some control over their good name or allow it to be controlled by public opinion and public ignorance; governments must either learn to value and cherish this precious asset of international reputation, or find that every action they perform, no matter how disinterested, is interpreted according to whatever negative attribute is currently ascribed to their nation." (p. 42)

This study aims to investigate concepts of image and reputation under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy and looks at these concepts from a two-way communication perspective in the context of relationship building. This view charges practitioners with a new role of promoting and managing their country's image and

reputation when interacting with foreign audiences. Hence, the first research question is proposed.

Research question 1: How do diplomats abroad promote and manage their country's image and reputation in everyday interactions and relationships with foreign publics?

2. The dimensions of trust and credibility under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy

The literature shows that public relations and international relations scholars hold a split view in regard to the concepts of trust and credibility. While public relations scholars view that trust pertains to a feeling of commitment and reliability of all parts engaged in a relationship (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), international relations scholars view that trust is a mean in establishing a country's reputation for credibility in the world of nations (Nye, 2008). Since this study aims to investigate the concepts of trust and credibility from a relational approach, the following research question is posited.

Research question 2: How do diplomats abroad build trust and credibility for their country in their relationships with the publics of another country?

3. The dimensions of communication and dialogue under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy

The literature shows intellectual divide regarding the use of communication in public diplomacy. While some scholars view open communication as the goal of public diplomacy "dependent on the practical benefits of truth and credibility" Gregory (2008, p. 276), others view communication as a means "to build and maintain mutual understanding between nations and cultures" (Wang & Chang, 2004, p. 22). Scholars

and professionals in both fields acknowledged that communication is essential to building long-term relationships, because in public diplomacy dialogue should be "a method for improving relationships and increasing understanding" (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, p. 19). Furthermore, international relations practitioners noted that one of the most common practices to promote a country's image with the public of another country is through the embassy's relations with the foreign media (Ross, 2002).

This study proposes the investigations of these two concepts under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy and posits the following research questions.

Research question 3: What is the role of dialogue and communication in building and maintaining relationships with foreign publics?

Research question 4: What is the best way to build a dialogic relationship with foreign publics?

4. The dimensions of relationship and network under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy

The literature shows that the overall approach of a government in another country plays an important role in diplomats' capability to build and institutionalize relationships. This study proposes a reverse investigation of the relationship building process and shifts the discussion from the diplomat's level to the embassy level, top-down instead of bottom-up, in order to understand how an embassy influences the way diplomats' build and maintain relationships with members of the host country.

The literature shows two different perspectives regarding the roles of embassies in public diplomacy. On one hand, scholars perceive traditional embassies as having a "bricks and mortar" diplomatic networks that replicate "the rigid hierarchies of the parent

foreign ministries" (Riordan, 2003, p. 14), context in which "despite all the talk about public diplomacy, foreign ministries find it difficult to keep giving it the kind of priority they say they give to public diplomacy" (Melissen, 2004, p. 120). Riordan (2005) viewed the embassy's rigid customary communication patterns and suggested a shift to a more flexible communication structure. The author viewed that by applying the dialogic paradigm to the structure and culture of foreign ministries and their embassies, the significant changes would have to refer to the time frame necessary to implement a country's strategies, because "dialogue-based public diplomacy needs time to work; it does not produce instant results" (Riordan, 2005, p. 192).

On the other hand, as noted by Metzl (2001, p. 80) "in many ways governments, through their embassies have always been networks," because "embassies across the globe interact with local leaders and populations and report conditions back to capitals and to other embassies."

The globalization of international relations has forced embassies "overcome the barriers that separate them from communities and find ways of engaging them in partnership by scaling up their public diplomacy work" (Leonard & Alakeson, 2000, p. 87). As noted by Gregory (2005), an inventive way to overcome these barriers was to employ local people through job-posting on embassy website.[25] This new type of public diplomacy, "*by* rather than *of* publics" (Hocking, 2005, p. 32) can only increase the public diplomacy role through locally engaged staff, which ultimately contributes with

[25] According to Bruce Gregory "This is not your grandparents' diplomacy" (2005, p. 5), the U.S. embassy website in Romania contained this job posting: USAID in U.S. Embassy Bucharest is seeking an "events coordinator" to manage press conferences, workshops, and media tours. He or she will be expected to work closely with USAID's Public Outreach Coordinator and the Embassy's Public Diplomacy Office." Job Opportunity, American Embassy Bucharest," http://www.usembassy.ro/USAID/aboutus06.htm

information about the host's country culture and customs. The diplomacy by the people would also make possible new partnerships and collaborations between embassies, NGOs and companies, and would enable the development of local skills programs in partnership with community groups. Henrikson (2006, p. 4) argued in favor of partnership in public diplomacy practice because, "it is a non-hierarchical idea, that invites others' participation, and it crosses boundaries from the domestic sphere to the international sphere, and also from the public to the private sphere."

Metzl (2001) viewed that the implications of a network global environment have changed the way governments and their diplomats do business in foreign countries, and suggested three ways for improving the practice of network diplomacy. First, diplomats must spare no efforts to identify and reach out to a broader constituency than ever before, build support for proposed action, and connect the participants to a global electronic dialogue groups. Second, a conscious effort must be made to shift government institutional culture from a focus on secrecy, information hoarding, and hierarchy to a system of openness, innovation, and information sharing. Third, knowledge-management and institutional learning must become not only a responsibility, but also a government culture. However, these proposed changes in the practice of network public diplomacy are possible only if the ambassador, "who is the face of the embassy" (Melissen, 2004, p. 127) transforms the culture of the mission. Melissen (2004, p. 127) observed that successful public diplomacy practices depend on the "involvement of the top management in the foreign ministry", the commitment of the head of mission in the embassy, and "the recognition of the importance of public diplomacy throughout the foreign ministry." The success of public diplomacy practice lays in diplomat's

"autonomy to develop the networks vital to future engagement, rather than pressure to function within an official policy perspective" (Davidson, 2004, p. 84).

In the ever changing international realm, where interactions at all levels between countries are in continuous transformation, the embassy is also forced to change. Melissen (2004, p. 125-126) suggested that the future embassies should become "a meeting place, a stage for discussion and debate, [or] a platform for societal contacts." In order to become open stages "future embassies need to be slimmer and more flexible, less tied to prestigious buildings and with more structures around functional networks" (Riordan, 2005, 193-194). Hughes (2007, p. 27) recommended that the embassy of the future should be more decentralized, in more flexible spaces, resembling "the Starbucks business model of going to where the customer is in multiple venues." Further, Hughes (2007, p. 34) noted that the relationship building process of public diplomacy lays at the center of the embassy work, and because the person-to-person contact often counts the most, "the public diplomacy of the future and the embassy of the future must be people-centric."

Hence, by applying the relationship management worldview of public relations to public diplomacy, the embassies in foreign lands become well-round institutions recognized for interacting with "establishing supportive relationships with the range of state and non-state actors that influence a nation's ability to carry out its foreign affairs objectives" (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 209).

By analyzing the top-down approach to the relationship building process of diplomats in the host country, this study suggests that the way diplomats build relationships abroad is congruent with the overall approach to public diplomacy at the top

level in the embassy. Furthermore, by analyzing the work of diplomats' from a relational perspective, one can form a general picture of a government's public diplomacy practices, and ultimately can describe an embassy's commitment to the relationship building process in the host country. The following research questions are posited.

Research question 5: How do diplomats abroad build and maintain relationships with foreign publics?

Research question 6: How do diplomats abroad build networks within a foreign civil society?

5. The roles of diplomats under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy

Overall, the literature reveals a limited number of definitions for the roles of a public diplomat. As noted by Fitzpatrick (2007, p. 197-198), under the relational worldview of public diplomacy "professionals must be managers of a nation's efforts to project its image and influence in a world that is characterized by the rising voices of nation-state actors." Further, the author noted that public diplomacy professionals are the "managers of institutional relationships, in which communication is viewed as a tool rather than an objective" (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 206). Furthermore, as the increasing participation of non-state actors in the international relations compelled public diplomacy professionals to "spend less time communicating and more time managing complex relationships among state and no-state actors" (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 198).

On the other hand, public diplomacy scholars viewed the role of public diplomat as "that of facilitator in the creation and management of these networks" (Hocking, 2005, p. 41), or "players in or facilitators of the amorphous transnational networks between

people and institutions co-existing with governments" (Hemery, 2005, p. 196). Davidson (2008, p. 198), who also observed public diplomacy's central role of building networks and relationships noted that public diplomats' "ability to build networks will be central to the conduct and future development of public diplomacy."

As governments are reformulating the roles of their embassies in foreign lands, the roles of diplomats are also changing. The ever culturally diverse global environment advances public diplomats' roles as "agents of comprehension" and requires them to "work on the boundary between culture as an interpretive and conjunctive mechanism" (Cohen, 1999, p. 16).

Under the relational paradigm, the roles of public diplomats abroad look very similar with the roles of public relations professionals who in their practice give special importance to developing personal contacts and person-to-person activities. In an embassy, public diplomacy efforts are led by a variety of public diplomacy personnel, including public affairs, cultural affairs, information, information resources, and regional English language officers (Svet, 2006). In order to overcome one of the pitfalls in the practice of network public diplomacy, Davidson (2008, p. 80) suggested that "building productive networks of empowered individuals is about more than having long lists of contacts; it is about connecting the right people with one another in the right way." Hence, while engaging in public diplomacy activities and programs, embassy personnel is also required to "interact not only with Foreign Ministry officials but with local

journalists, authors, scientists, artists, athletes, experts and academics as well the average citizen."[26]

Because the purpose of this dissertation is to understand the relationship building function of U.S. diplomats abroad, and to explore their roles of facilitators and/or managers of relationships with foreign publics, the following research questions are posited:

Research Question 7: What are the roles of diplomats in the relationship building process with foreign publics?

Research question 8: How often [if ever] do diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between representatives of the civil/business society of their country and their counterparts in the foreign society in which they operate?

Research question 9: How often [if ever] do diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between community groups and government representatives within the foreign society in which they operate?

[26] U.S. Public Diplomacy – Time to get back in the game. A report to members of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, John F. Kerry Chairman, February 13, 2009, (p. 1). Available online at http://www.gpoaccess.govcongress/index.html, Retrieved on February 27, 2009.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study conducted to understand the relationship-building function of diplomats abroad, and to explore the relationship management process in which diplomats embark on while serving abroad.

For exploratory research in which the goal is to understand a process or a phenomenon, researchers utilize qualitative methods, which provide "an enormously useful variety of means for examining how humans make sense out of their world" (Potter, 1996, p. 12). Moreover, for exploratory research in which the goal is to build upon or enlarge the existing theoretical framework in an academic field, researchers rely mostly on qualitative methods (Franklin, 1995). Referring to the purpose of qualitative research, Lindlof and Taylor (2002, p. 5) said that qualitative methods are employed to understand "how humans infuse their actions – and the world that results – with meanings."

This dissertation employed qualitative methods in the form of long interviews in order to 1) gain understanding of how diplomats build and maintain relationships with foreign publics, and to 2) build and expand the theoretical foundation of public diplomacy.

Empirical operationalization

Because the purpose of this study was to investigate the way diplomats build and manage relationships with foreign publics, the concepts of *diplomats* and *foreign publics* were operationalized following the rationale presented in the introductory chapter. In this

study, the concept of *diplomats* pertains to U.S. appointed diplomats in Romania, and the concept of *foreign publics* pertains to members of the Romanian's civil society. This way the empirical analysis can take a tangible approach on how diplomats of one country, the United States engage in relationships with the publics of another country, Romania.

However, it is important to note that this operationalization will take the analysis in a unique direction. The results of the investigation of one's country's public diplomacy practices abroad is uniquely affected by the host country's culture, political system, media system, economic development, and the legislative system. Hence, the investigation of the relationship management process carried out by U.S. diplomats in Romania will yield specific findings that pertain exclusively to Romania. Furthermore, because this study sought to understand the relationship management process conducted by U.S. diplomats in Romania the dimensions of the relationship building process including *image*, *trust*, *reputation*, *communication*, *dialogue*, and *relationship* will specifically determine this analysis. For example, Romanian culture could determine the way in which U.S. diplomats engage in dialogue with the members of the Romanian's civil society. Therefore, it is important to note, that the results of this study are not generalizable to public U.S. public diplomacy practices in other countries.

However, from an epistemological view, the qualitative approach adopted in this study, enables an in-depth understanding of public diplomacy practices, which in turn, could provide a framework for future studies that would seek to test the findings of this study.

Sample

The sample in this dissertation is consistent with the literature about qualitative research which notes that sample size is less important than repetition of among respondents (McCracken, 1993). The participants in this study were selected based on the combination of the two sampling strategies, including purposeful and snowballing. First, the sample of participants in this study is purposive. Since the main focus of this dissertation was to understand how U.S. public diplomacy practices in Romania, the only criterion for participation in this study was that participants were officially appointed to work in the U.S. embassy in Romania. According to Schwandt (1997, p. 122), the objective of the *purposeful sampling* strategy is to select participants because "there may be a good reason to believe that what goes on there is critical to understanding some process or concept, or to test or elaborate some established theory."

Second, the sample in this study was selected through a networking technique or snowballing. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981, p. 141) described *snowball sampling* as a strategy that yields participants through referrals that are "made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest." Potential participants were sent an electronic invitation to participate in this dissertation, together with a brief summary of the nature of the study (see Ethics of research). If they agreed, appointments for telephone interviews were set. Interviews lasted between one hour and an hour and a half. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Following completion of the interview, participants were able to confirm the information and/or make necessary changes. One of the participants specifically asked

that the information should be used exclusively as background, and therefore, the data was collected through personal notes. These were also compiled with the data obtained from the other interviews.

As noted by McCraken (1988) a qualitative work that relies on the long interview should rely on the data collected from seven or eight interviews until redundancy is determined. Of a total population of 12 U.S. diplomats that served in Romania during 2001-2009, a total of 10 participants were contacted, of which 8 responded. Seven U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania participated in the study. Of all participants three were active in other position in U.S. embassies around the world. The participants asked to be referred as "American diplomats formerly serving in Romania."

The Long Interview

McCracken's (1988) guidelines for conducting the long interview were adopted as template for designing the interview strategy. Hence, the data for the study were collected using a semi-structured guide that allowed participants for open-ended responses and ample elaborations. Bingham and Moore (1959) described qualitative interviewing as a conversation with a purpose. The interview guide included probe questions to elicit information pertaining to the research questions. Probes were also used to further explore issues that unexpectedly came up during the interviews. A copy of the complete semi-structured interview guide is in the Appendix. All interviews were conducted on the telephone.

All of the questions proposed in this semi-structured interview guide were formulated for this study and built from Ledingham and Bruning (1998) organization-

public relationships (ORRs) indicators: trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment. Huang's (2001) organization-public relationship dimensions of trust, control mutuality, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment were also analyzed. However, because this study does not seek to measure the effectiveness of relationships, or to evaluate relationships' outcomes, Huang's (2001) scale was not employed.

The interview questions were formulated around the relational dimensions identified in this study, image and reputation, trust and credibility, and communication and dialogue, and relationship. All questions in the semi-structured interview guide required open-ended responses. Participants were asked to illustrate their professional experience in Romania with vivid examples and ample commentaries.

Data collection

All interviews were conducted on the phone over a period of five weeks that extended from May to June 2009. Five interviews were recorded and notes were collected during the other two. The verbatim transcripts and the notes were compiled for analysis.

Method of analysis

The interpretation of data was conducted by the sole author of this dissertation. The verbatim transcripts and notes allowed for identification of emerging themes within each individual interview and compare the themes across the interviews. Transcripts and notes were coded and marked with the respective theme (Potter, 1996). During the

coding process the author continuously switched between inductive and deductive thinking (Strauss, 1987, p. 11). Using inductive analysis that prescribes linking and relating sub-categories by denoting conditions, context, and consequences, categorical groups of responses (based on the structure of the interview guide) were examined using the process described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This process allowed the author to analyze the data without making assumptions. Same attention was given to each transcript and note collected during the interviews. An initial list of categories was created.

The process of open coding enabled the author to break down, examine, compare, conceptualize, and categorize data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) the goal of this process is to develop concepts based on both the data and on the researcher's contextual knowledge. Rigorous comparison of documents allowed for insight into meaning that participants might not be able to articulate otherwise. The initial themes were created as responses to the following questions: "(a) What actually happens in the text? and (b) What category does the textual passage suggest" (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Veter, 2000, p. 79). After setting the initial themes, the authro compared the transcripts and observed the most common themes that emerged from the data. Themes of responses were derived through a method of constant comparison and evaluation of the transcripts, looking at causal conditions, context, and interactions. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 102) this is process is named "open coding" process in which the researcher looks "for both similarities and differences" among categories. The author followed Strauss' (1987, p. 30) suggestion and analyzed the data "with microscopic precision in order to minimize the risk of

overlooking important categories." In addition the author looked at each line in the data with the goal to perform a "line-by-line" analysis (Strauss, 1987, p. 82).

The next step in the analysis was to use axial coding to determine how themes were related to each other. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described axial coding, as the process in which the researcher looks how themes are related to sub-themes to form a fuller explanation of a phenomenon. According to the authors, "the purpose of axial coding is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding" Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 124). This process also allowed the author to reorganize the results of open coding and create new relationships between concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) noted that axial coding uses codes to form connections between similar codes to reduce the number of codes and to identify overarching themes more easily. According to Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, and Veter (2000, p. 79) this process assists the researcher "in the refinement and differentiation of already available concepts, whereby these first acquire the status of categories" and then, guide the researcher to work "along the axes of these categories." Straus and Corbin (1990, p. 116) defined a category as "that central phenomenon around which all other categories are integrated." The overall goal of this analysis was to enquire about the 'story' contained in the data (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Veter, 2000). Furthermore, the author aimed to bring the events reported in the data around the following questions proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 116):

> "(a) What is the most striking feature of the field of investigation?; (b) What do I consider to be the main problem?; (c) What is the central theme of the story?; (d) Which phenomena are represented again and again in the data?"

Although the initial analysis of begins with open coding, the cross analysis of data, or the 'axial' coding becomes increasingly predominant (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Veter, 2000). During the analysis the author sought to identify "patterns, similarities, and differences within [the] patterned material" (Hodder, 2000, p. 711). In addition, the author looked for 1) any emergent categories different than the ones proposed in the semi-structured interview guide that could be relevant to the study, and 2) for any logical connection that could exist between comments made by each participant, and among overall comments made by all participants. Further, data was sorted to compress all the transcripts and notes into one single document. This process allowed the author to visualize the central ideas that emerged from the aggregated concepts into categories and to identify the interactions and relationships with other categories. Finally, the author looked for 1) the most common themes, and respectively 2) for the significant outlying themes that were relevant to the 'story' told by data.

Overall, this process allowed the author to analyze the data in the context of the existing literature and to make inferences with respect to the meaning of the data within the conceptual framework set by the research questions. The foundation of the findings is supported by direct quotes from the participants in this study, and employs Lincoln's and Guba's (2003, p. 283) assertion that the researcher needs to be "conscious of having readers hear their informants." In the light of Wolcott's (1994) suggestion, the analysis was divided in three areas of consideration, 1) *description*, which allowed me to preserve the form, content, and context of each response, in the form of participants' words; 2) *analysis*, which allowed me to categorize the data and identify the main themes across the interviews; and 3) *interpretation*, which allowed the analysis of the data from a general

perspective – from the outside of the box – case in which, the author was able to make theoretical assumptions and ground my study and its contribution within the overall literature of public diplomacy.

Validity

In qualitative empirical research, validity is viewed as "the quality of craftsmanship in an investigation, which includes continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings" (Kvale, 1995, p. 27). Thus, it can be said that the quality of craftsmanship gives the quality of the analytical investigation. Since in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument (McCraken, 1988), the validity is given by the extent to which the researcher accurately measures the value of what it is examining (Wolcott, 2005).

To ensure validity of findings, before the analysis, participants were asked to review the transcripts and make the necessary changes. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) called this procedure member validation. These authors viewed member validation as a process of "taking findings back to the field and determining whether the participants recognize them as true and accurate" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 242). This process of "taking findings back to the field" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 242) continued the process of transparency in which the author of this study embarked on at the beginning of each interview. In addition, this process reconfirmed to the participants their fundamental contribution to this dissertation in understanding how U.S. diplomats build and maintain relationships with the Romanian civil society.

Ethics of the Research

Throughout this study participants were never referred or thought of as *subjects*. Rather, participants were viewed as research partners who were actively involved in the data collection. Further, during the process of analysis participants' voices and tonalities were given the appropriate interpretive approach to illustrate "their worlds and how they created and shared meanings about their lives" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 34).

The basis of ethical considerations toward the participants in this study followed Fowler's (2002) basic principles of ethical issues in an empirical study. These are, 1) informing the participants in the study, 2) protecting your participants, and 3) explaining benefits to your participants. Before data collection in the summer of 2009, the researcher followed the required steps and submitted the protocol to the College of Communication and Information Institutional Review Board (IRB) which further submitted it for approval to the University of Tennessee IRB committee, which approved it. Also, the University of Tennessee IRB officially approved the use of the collected data for this study.

Through the research process, the researcher was considerate to ethical conduct. From the first contact, 1) each participant was informed about the title of my dissertation and its purposes. Also, 2) participants were informed that since the focus of this dissertation was only the relationship process of U.S. diplomats in Romania, the investigator was not interested in any other political issues surrounding the diplomatic actions in Romania. In addition, 3) each participant was informed about the benefits of his or her participation; and, 4) that because personal identifiers were not relevant for this

study, their names and positions will be kept undisclosed. 5) As a sign of reciprocity with the participants and if they were interested, each participant was promised a copy of the results of the study after its completion. Finally, 6) the participants were informed about the principal investigator and the organization carrying out the research.

After the first contact was established, in the email preceding the telephone conversation, each participant was sent the informed consent of participation. The consent form assured participants that their cooperation is voluntary, and that they can skip any questions they do not want to answer, or entirely withdraw their participation from the study. The informed consent was also read in its entirety at the beginning of each interview.

In the case that the conversation was recorded, the researcher instructed each participant, that in the unlikely event that confidential information was revealed, they should ask for the interview to be stopped, case in which the researcher would proceed to erase the undesired recorded information and only then, the interview could continue. Finally, in the case that the interview was recorded, the participants were asked to review the verbatim transcripts of the conversation and make the necessary changes before data was analyzed.

All the correspondence is stored in my password protected computer. In compliance with the IRB policies, the author will keep the transcripts of the interview in a password protected computer three years after the completion of the study, date after which, all data collected during interviews will be deleted, in order to prevent any misuse of the data.

Reflexivity – Thinking outside the box[27]

As the sole investigator of this study, the author was constantly aware that during qualitative analysis self-deception and personal prejudices can invalidate the results of an entire investigation. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher as the research instrument is not value free, rather, the qualitative inquiry "recognizes the personal biography of the researcher who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 28). As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 14) qualitative research emphasizes "the social constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry."

Throughout the analysis, the author was conscious of the fact that this study, like any other, can not avoid the researcher's subjectivity (Ang, 1985). Hence, the author' background is explained.

The author's professional career includes working for the President of Romania, Emil Constantinescu in the team of professionals assembled in order to assist him toward re-election. Although this special team gathered specialized loyal experts, the author was never part of any political party, nor affiliated with one, and the author's responsibilities were strictly professional. While working for the President Constantinescu, the author was never involved in the relationship between the President and the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest. Furthermore, the author was never involved in any domestic or international

[27] The Arbinger Institute (2002). Leadership and Self-deception: Getting out of the Box.

political activities in which the President participated, and did not participate in any political decisions making. The author's job was strictly in the area of public relations.

Furthermore, the reason this study's time frame is 2001-2009 is not a haphazard. The author came in the United States in late 2001, and since then, has gradually lost contact with the political and social environment in Romania. However, the author acknowledges the pitfalls of an insider point of view and is aware of the possibility that an outsider could see the same phenomena differently.

Therefore, the researcher employed the member validation method and the results of this analysis relied heavily on participants' perspective. Furthermore, during the analysis, the author was constantly aware that the highest ethical standards in public relations yield the most professional unprejudiced results.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS

Of the12 U.S. diplomats[28] that served in Romania during 2001-2009 a total of 10 participants were contacted. Of the eight U.S. diplomats that responded to the initial contact, seven participated in the study.[29] The participants represent a variety of diplomatic positions during their service in Romania: charge d'affairs (1 participant), deputy chief of mission (2 participants), public affairs officer (2 participants), press and cultural attaché (1 participant), press attaché (2 participants), and cultural attaché (1 participant)[30]. Throughout, these diplomatic positions are typical to an American embassy overseas, as the hierarchic structure of the U.S. embassy in Romania has not changed since USIA:

> "Overseas, the staffing structure that had been in place for decades remained essentially unchanged: assistant cultural affairs officers (ACAOs) and assistant information officers (AIOs) (and increasingly, information resources officers, or IROs) reported to cultural affairs officers (CAOs) and information officers (IOs), who, in turn reported to deputy public affairs officers (DPAOs) and PAOs. The PAO, as had always been the case, reported to the deputy chief of mission (DCM) and the ambassador."[31]

The professional diplomats participants in this study approached each open-ended question in various ways and from different perspectives, contingent to his/her position in the U.S. embassy in Romania. The interview guide was developed to address each

[28] One of the participants in the study, help me count the entire population of U.S. diplomats appointed to serve in Romania during 2001-2009.
[29] To keep the participants' identity confidential, as I promised to them, throughout the study, I will identify the participants as diplomat 1 through 6.
[30] Several participants held more than one position while serving in Romania.
[31] The United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, "Getting the People Part Right: A report on the Human Resource Dimension of U.S. Public Diplomacy" (2008), p. 24.

research question, but since all the questions were open-ended allowing respondents to stray as wished, the analysis considered all the themes that emerged from the data. In the following section, direct quotes are used to illustrate findings that emerged across interviews.

Three dominant themes emerged from the data: 1) *public diplomacy as one-way communication*; and 2) *public diplomacy as relationship building*. The third predominant theme that evolved from the data was considered at first a miscellaneous category, because emerged independent of any research questions. However, because of its constant recurrence across interviews, the initial category was re-evaluated and transformed into a predominant theme named 3) *public diplomacy as diplomacy of deeds*.

Public diplomacy as one-way communication

According to the participants in the study, one of the main functions of public diplomacy, and consequently of diplomats was communication. In this context, the majority of participants viewed 'advocacy' their main function abroad. Advocating for their country included both promoting America's image and America's foreign policy with the public of the host country as diplomats constantly tried "to get information out to people about what the United States is, and what is doing in the world" (Diplomat 2). Further, Diplomat 2 explained:

> That is one of our main objectives in serving in the foreign embassies, communicating the American point of view, communicating information about the United States, about the American policy and American government, American society, and the American culture to the foreign publics.

For U.S. diplomats abroad, communication was "what we are all about" (Diplomat 6). In this context, public diplomacy was viewed by the participants, especially those who served in the press office, as mere communication.

> Every individual in the embassy has a responsibility to promote the American foreign policy, to try to help Romanian understand American society in the day-to-day work with Romanians. (Diplomat 2)

> Communication is the key. It is the one thing that you must be able to do. (Diplomat 3)

> The American diplomats in the embassy are the representatives of the administration, the representatives of the president abroad, so they all have the responsibility to communicate the American point of view to the Romanian public that they interact with. The role of communication is absolutely crucial, because that is one of our main objectives, in serving in the foreign embassies, communicating the American point of view, communicating information about the United States […] you have to communicate, you have to get communication out, and you have to use all wide variety of means of communication to get that information out. So communication is key. (Diplomat 2)

Participants in the study, especially those working in the press section observed that the function of public communication of U.S. messages abroad was mostly achieved through the employment of elaborated techniques, which included the host country's broadcasted media, especially the national and private television stations. According to participants, it was a common occurrence for the embassy representatives (a) to engage in televised discussions with other political leaders, or participate in popular political talk shows, "we had people on the *Marius Tuca Show*"[32] affirmed Diplomat 4; or (b) to simply provide various educational English programs for children.

[32] *Marius Tuca Show* was a TV talk-show, which launched a new trend in TV shows in Romania. Marius Tuca distinguished himself in the 1990s as a political analyst and a TV host. He also contributed to the transformation of the *Jurnalul National* into the best selling newspaper in Romania. In 1997–1999, Tuca hosted *Milionarii de la miezul noptii* on Antena 1. After 1999, the show was named *Marius Tuca Show*. The TV show ceased in 2005. Available online at http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Marius_Tuca Retrieved on June 22, 2009.

> Well, we use the [Romanian] news media a great deal, engaging the [Romanian] news media, making sure they [the Romanian journalists] have access to the information they need about the United States: using interviews, using news releases. And then, to the wider [Romanian] public, we would have the American corners all around Romania. Our programs with libraries, our speaker programs and providing information, programming for Romanian television networks, we provide some educational programs for the Romanian television networks: English teaching programs. (Diplomat 4)

In conclusion, according to the participants, a large component of the public diplomacy function in Romania was to "reach out to the Romanian public through a wide variety of mechanism" in order to achieve "our goal."

The public communicator

One common element that emerged across the interviews was the significance in assigning the appropriate diplomat (rank and responsibility) as the Embassy's public communicator depending on the nature of the issue under discussion. According to the participants in the study, the more important the issue, the higher the authority that delivered the message; and vice-versa, the higher the authority, the more important the message that is being communicated. In their words participants explained:

> Some people have a much higher profile. [For example], the ambassador would give interview, he would answer questions from the press; certainly, he would be the highest profile in the embassy, as far as presenting the American image and providing information about the United States. (Diplomat 2)

> Some have access to a much bigger megaphone, or public address system than others, the ambassador obviously is in the position where he can communicate with thousands, perhaps millions of people, by interview, by television appearances, by interview in newspapers and magazines. (Diplomat 1)

> We need to know when we are supposed to be talking; we need to know with whom we are suppose to be talking; what the venue is; and what important is our ammunition. Is it OK for the public diplomacy officer to speak, or you might need to have an officer from a particular section of the embassy to bring expertise to the discussion, or do we need to bring out the cannons, the ambassador or the chief deputy of mission out talking about issues. (Diplomat 6)

These comments further reflect the importance of an accurate barometer inside the Embassy which indicated the importance of each event in which the American diplomats were involved, or were about to get involved. Furthermore, these examples reveal the importance the Embassy and diplomats placed on communicating with foreign public through the national broadcast system, in order to achieve the goal of reaching "thousands, perhaps millions of people" to communicate the U.S. message.

Managing the U.S. image through direct communication

Overall, when asked about ways to promote the United States' image abroad, the participants in this study revealed that communication became the goal of public diplomacy. U.S. diplomats' main function abroad was to advocate for his/her country using all the communication means available in the host country. As noted by participants, "a degree of control" over "direct messaging" was important when it referred to promoting U.S. policy in the host country:

> […] the more direct messaging, whether it was centered on policy or centered on other things – is a component that U.S. embassy does anywhere … commenting directly with the public on what our positions are on the issues of the day … there's a certain type of messaging about policy things that has to stay tightly controlled. [In addition], on some of the most controversial things in our relationship, which has been very positive, but on those things that have been controversial, yes, you have to maintain a degree of control. (Diplomat 1)

Another way to promote America's image in Romania was through the Embassy's website and the American libraries, which functioned in the "American Corners" located in eight county libraries around Romania.

> We have a website that we maintain. The state department, various bureaus maintain websites, the embassy maintains its own website to try to orient its information toward the Romanian public. […] We maintain the American cultural center in Bucharest, and also a number of American corners all around Romania:

> with American books, information about the United States; also digitized information about the United States, databases, information available by internet. (Diplomat 2)

The use of the Embassy's website illustrates another one-way communication strategy employed by diplomats abroad to "provide as much information as we can about the United States," explained one participant.

Communication as means of persuasion

Another element common across interviews was the employment of communication as an act of persuasion. According to the participants, persuasion was either through direct "controlled messaging," or overt "you don't always have to use the hammer to have the nail go in," explained a participant. However, in either cases participants viewed persuasion as an important aspect of American public diplomacy abroad.

> [We are] trying to get information out to people about what the United States is doing in the world, and why is doing what it does. We have this idea that if we make people understand why we're doing something, than they will agree with it. Now, of course that doesn't always happen, but that is the rationale behind what we're doing. (Diplomat 2)

Overall, participants in this study agreed that communication was an important component in the Embassy's way of interacting with the foreign populace. Whether it was direct, controlled, overt, or covert, the communication with the population of the host country was an important facet of an Embassy's work, and therefore for American diplomats abroad. One participant commented with regard to the multifaceted aspect of communication in a U.S. embassy:

> My comment on megaphone diplomacy is true up to a point, but the reality is that in the complex world in which we live, all of these forms of public diplomacy co-exist. And sometime interact with each other at the same time. (Diplomat 1)

"All these forms of communication" refer to another, more preeminent theme that emerged across interviews, in which communication is perceived as a mean to build relationships with foreign people.

Diplomacy as relationship building

The second major theme that emerged across the interviews refers to the relationship building process in which diplomats engage with the foreign public while serving abroad. This comprehensive theme includes five major categories, and each major category includes a number of subcategories, which developed when participants talked about other various aspects of the relationship building process. This all-inclusive theme is investigated from the perspective of the relational dimensions proposed in the literature.

1. The concepts of image and reputation

Research question 1: How do diplomats promote and maintain their country's image and reputation in everyday interactions and relationships with foreign publics?

The overall responses to this question reflected the roles and positions occupied by diplomats in the embassy. According to the participants in the study, promoting America's image in the host country was one of the main functions of each diplomat. The subcategories that emerged while addressing this issue refer to the importance of public opinion in the host country, the significance of using the right tools for promoting America's image in the every day interactions with foreign populace, and the Embassy's

personnel role as the managers of their country's effort to promote its image abroad. The following examples and comments reveal the various ways in which each American diplomat promoted their country in their every day interactions and relationships with foreign public.

> There are a couple of broad ways to answer the question. It depends on where one is sited: the public affairs officer, cultural attaché, press attaché, council for public diplomacy, who are providing a hundred percent of their effort on promoting public diplomacy goals and objectives. [For example] a week might go by where most of what I would be doing would fall into the public diplomacy dimension [which] would really be under the public affairs side. (Diplomat 1)

1. Public opinion in the host country

For U.S. diplomats interviewed, the responses to this research question were contingent to the overall public opinion in the host country at the time of their service. Hence, participants constantly referred to the foundation on which they 1) built the appropriate public diplomacy programs and initiatives, or 2) engaged in relationships with the foreign public. Participants referred to being "cognoscenti" of the already existing general public opinion regarding America's image, as well as the historical context of the country.

> We always tried to be as cognoscenti as possible of what the public opinion setting was in Romania. (Diplomat 1)

> I think it depends on the country. I mean, you really have to look at the historical context. Romania being a post Communist society, when I was there was before they got into NATO, I was there for the George Bush [senior] "Rainbow Speech" in the rain in the Palace Square. So, I think you have to look at the context.[33] (Diplomat 4)

[33] "You know, I'll never forget my trip to Bucharest at the 'Rainbow' speech. It was one of the most moving experiences of my Presidency. It moved me deeply during the moment," President GW Bush about his visit to Romania in 2002. Bush helped commemorate Romania's NATO accession when he visited Bucharest in November 2002. On that occasion, in his memorable 'Rainbow' speech to tens of thousands in Revolution Square, he congratulated the Romanian people on their progress towards building democratic

In addition, participants unanimously agreed that, they view Romania as an atypical example of the European Union member in comparison with other countries in Europe. That is, not only because of Romania's collaboration with the American military forces in two wars, but also because of Romanians' continuous interest in what America is and represents. According to the participants,

> Because obviously, over the past number of years, there've been instances of Romanians important contribution to the coalition efforts in Afghanistan which are ongoing and continue. Romania's important contribution in Iraq, … which in other European countries were very controversial during the Bush administration. So, we understood that the Romanian public opinion compared with other places in Europe was still quite positive for most of the last number of years. (Diplomat 1)

> I think that our efforts with the military, not only the training operations between our countries, but also the Romanian engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kosovo. While the negotiations obviously took place in a more traditional setting, the willingness of the Romanian public to support those things… . (Diplomat 6)

> One of my predecessors said to me "Romania is ours to loose."[…] That in general, Romanians have a reasonably positive attitude about most aspects of the United States. (Diplomat 6)

In this positive environment for both the political elite and members of the civil society, participants acknowledged that their efforts to promote America's image and reputation in their everyday interactions and relationships with the Romanian publics was much easier than in other parts of the world, especially compared to the "old" Europe.

> [Romania] is very much not old Europe. It is something totally different. (Diplomat 5)

> Being an American diplomat at the time when I was in Romania was in some respects a very exciting thing to be, because we were very new, and we were not the Russians. We were human being with follies and foibles and every things else, and I think Romanian people gave us a lot of credit. They looked at us as a people

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institutions and a market economy following the fall of communism. Available on line bucharest.usembassy.gov/resources/.../125Years_RO-AM_Relations.pdf Retrieved on June 23, 2009.

> and a country that would help them build themselves into a better country to build a better life for themselves, and that was exactly what we were trying to do, and I hope and I believe that people saw that sincerity and appreciated it. (Diplomat 5)

> We were fortunate in Romania in the period that I was working, in that, Romania was interested in joining both NATO and the EU. So, Romanians were very interested in learning more about the US, because they wanted to find out all the things they had to do to join these organizations. They wanted to know what does the US expect of us, what are the requirements, how do we go about doing this, so there was a general interest that we could work with. (Diplomat 3)

As noted by participants, building on the "credit" they received from Romanians, and on the "very positive public opinion" made U.S. diplomats' role of promoting their country's image that much easier. Therefore, participants in this study recognized the importance of a positive public opinion among the foreign public of the host country in general, and the representatives of civil society in particular in establishing successful collaborative relationships between the two countries at all levels. In this positive environment, diplomats were able to initiate collaborations and partnerships that transformed in long-term relationships. One diplomat explained,

> … in the post-Communist era, the U.S. has benefited overall of pretty strong level of goodwill, positive interest on the part of the Romanian public, and for the most part in the post communist period, pretty strong interest in forging partnership, working together on a collaborative basis…

> Compared to a lot of countries in Europe, and certainly beyond the nature of the relationship and that would include its kind of a more public dimension, has generally been very positive, and that is a source of strength for [U.S.] public diplomacy efforts in Romania and also tends to shape the strategy and the objective, because they're things that the U.S. can inspire to do in partnership with Romania. This has been particularly true, I think in the last 8-9 years. (Diplomat 1)

Although over the past decade, the United States' image in Romania has remained positive, and Romanians have shown constant interest in building relationships and collaborations with Americans, participants recognized that this positive image is not

automatic, rather, it requires "constant caring and attention." Furthermore, participants observed that the relationships and friendships developed between the Americans and Romanians need to be renewed every generation, and "not take it for granted." Another common element across the interviews emerged when participants agreed that one of the main functions of U.S. diplomats serving in Romania is to maintain this positive image of their country among Romanian people at all levels of society. In their words, participants explained:

> With democratic countries, you don't automatically become friends every generation. You have to build every generation with new people because it is not automatic. Even though Romania is part of NATO, EU, it doesn't necessarily dispose Romanians positively to the US. If you want to have them positively dispose to the US, you have to go there, you have to develop the relationships directly, and you have to explain America to them again and again every generation. It doesn't happen by itself. (Diplomat 3)

> I think that if we are not paying attention, there is a lot of other competing interests for Romania as a country, and the European Union is one of them. And we needed to work to make sure that we maintain that positive attitude toward us, and realize that it is not going to be automatic. Since Romania has joined the European Union, it will be only natural that due to its integration she is going to less automatically turn to the U.S. for guidance and more towards her neighbors. That is true. (Diplomat 6)

> … any idea that we ever had that we somehow are going to lecture them about things, I don't think that actually….because it didn't work in the past, and it certainly won't work now. Does it mean that we are not an important voice in society here or that people don't care about what we say? Yes, people care about what we say, they care about our opinion. But it is not in the same place that it was 20 years ago. Or even 10 years ago. I think it would do us no good in trying to influence publics or the government by assuming that we can go in and lecture people about what they have to do. This is a grown-up country now, making grown-up decisions. It listens to other countries. We are influential here, we know that, but we don't take that for granted, and we certainly don't take it for granted in the public diplomacy aspect of things. (Diplomat 6)

2. Tools employed to promote the Unites States image abroad

When asked about "*how do U.S. diplomats promote the Unites States' image and reputation in the host country,*" participants noted a wide range of tools "that we use in order to do this." A common element that emerged across interviews was the importance of creating public diplomacy programs that would advance the Unites States image in the host country. In this context, participants referred to the public diplomacy programs and initiatives specifically developed to meet the needs of the members of Romanian civil society. Participants explained that these programs developed at the embassy level were created to have a dual purpose: one to promote and maintain a positive image for the United States, and second, to set the foundation for mutual interest and development between the two countries:

> …we began creating a website, so that people could go to the website to see what kinds of activity that we were doing, which we try to create a positive image of the embassy, of the U.S., and of course all of our programs, all of our assistance, our technical advise programs, all of these are also meant to portray the U.S. as a country looking for opportunities for mutual development, for mutual assistance. (Diplomat 3)

Furthermore, participants acknowledged the importance of public diplomacy programs in enabling diplomats to promote the Unites States' image and reputation to the members of the civil society in Romania. In this context, participants described the public diplomacy initiatives in which they were involved contingent to their role in the embassy: professional, scientific, or academic exchange programs, cultural programs, initiatives in the education sector, military programs, or other areas of common interest. Participants suggested that these public diplomacy initiatives could reveal additional "intersections of interest," and could yield mutual collaborations.

Public diplomacy initiatives

A common element that resulted from the data was the overall perception of what public diplomacy meant for U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania. Participants depicted public diplomacy as an instrument toward achieving the final policy goal of the United States in Romania, through implementing specific programs in that would promote their country's image, "by looking at things that are not so essential" such as arts or sports.

> Our objective in serving abroad is to promote American foreign policy abroad. So, we have to keep in mind that we are there to support that policy, and we are there to try to help our host to understand American policy and why it does what it does around the world. (Diplomat 2)

> I think the main thing you are looking for are the areas of common interest to start of with, but if you are looking at trying to talk to people who might not be your natural audience for you, and you are looking for things that are not so essential to your discussion, and you can use common interests in a way to have access to foreign audiences, and that could be through culture, sports, or other kinds of arts sometimes. (Diplomat 6)

> There was a lot of attention being paid to the public diplomacy angle. Public diplomacy was always built into thinking any time we scheduled an event, or anytime we contacted a journalist we always were thinking about "how the public would react." So, I think that in general, we were fortunate that we were a player at the table. I mean we definitely were present. (Diplomat 4)

Although participants made reference to the importance of incorporating public diplomacy programs into the overall Embassy's functions, public diplomacy was mostly perceived an instrument toward achieving the overall diplomatic goal, by "being built into thinking," while diplomats were always aware of "how the public would react" to a particular diplomatic event or program.

3. The management of a country's image abroad

A main theme evident across the interviews was the central role played by the diplomats abroad in representing their country in every day interactions with the members of the civil society, "We are the leading edge in terms of what the public sees, so, our role was very important." Overall, the participants in this study recognized the responsibility they carried while serving in abroad, of being the first ones to interact with the foreign populace. The metaphor used by one of the participants is illustrative:

> We are the people in the front lines, aren't we? We are the people that are kind of… we are kind of where the rubber meets the road, you know? We are the people on the front lines. We either benefit from a good relationship, or we suffer from a bad one. … we are on the front lines, we are the people that meet the people, who are in another country on a daily basis because we live here. (Diplomat 4)

As it resulted from all the interviews, U.S. diplomats benefited from an overall positive public opinion in Romania during the time frame analyzed in this study. Still, even though they were mostly working in a positive environment, participants agreed upon one of the most important functions of an U.S. diplomat abroad. In this vein, a common denominator emerged across the interviews, when the participants described the way they viewed their role of "*managers of their country's efforts to project America's image abroad*." Several participants answered simply but enthusiastically "Absolutely," or "That is one of the things what we do," and then described with illustrative examples specific to the embassy section(s) in which they worked, situations in which they were able to promote a positive image for their country in everyday interactions with Romanians. The following comment is illustrative of the early 2000s:

> In the case of Romania we were trying to bring about the ascension into NATO, in building democratic society, in building democratic institutions, how we did

> that every day, and the image we projected to Romanian people to make them receptive to all that it was up to [every American diplomat in the embassy] it was all of our collective efforts, as we judged the situation day-to-day on the ground of what was going to work. (Diplomat 5)

The role of American Embassy in managing the U.S. image abroad

Another common element among all participants was the embassy's central role in supporting diplomats' efforts in implementing successful public diplomacy programs and initiatives: 1) from the importance of the ambassador's interest and involvement in certain activities, 2) to setting the tone for the media interviews, or 3) simply investing time and resources in identifying members of both the United States and Romanian societies that could help the embassy carry out certain public diplomacy programs for a longer period of time.

> Traditionally, the embassy, the ambassador and other diplomats have had quite a bit of leverage on the nature of the relationship as a whole. … In terms of the effort, to promote a positive climate for the relationship in Romania the embassy role is crucial…. [and] when it comes to the bilateral relationships, there is an expectation, and in reality, in most places as it is in Romania, that the U.S. embassy would have a leading role in shaping what the U.S. government represents, what is doing. (Diplomat 1)

> The embassy was the primary conduit in executing public diplomacy in Romania. The embassy manages the informational programs. The embassy provided a lot of information to the news media, through interviews and other sources of information. So, as far as public diplomacy concerns, I would say that the embassy is the main conduit. (Diplomat 2)

> I think we were very successful in finding people, Romanians and other Americans who were not with the Embassy, but worked or lived in Romania; and NGOs, I thought we were very successful in findings the ones that had the ability to carry out their responsibilities, not only in making a program work but in sustaining it for longer term. (Diplomat 3)

On the other hand, several participants recognized the difficulties in managing United States' image abroad. According to the participants, diplomats' mission to

manage the U.S. image abroad became even more difficult in the context of a constant flux of information that span from the news media, to the popular U.S. culture – projected by the Hollywood movies and other entertaining programs that most Western societies, including Romania incorporate in their regular broadcastings. Participants acknowledged the importance of public diplomacy programs and initiatives organized by U.S. diplomats with the support of the embassy, in order to promote counter-images that present the real United States and its citizens to the members of their host country.

> Are we the managers? No. We can manage the government efforts, and we can influence a small portion of private sector, or non-governmental activities, but it is almost impossible for us to manage the U.S. government image in Romania. In part because a lot of the things have nothing to do with what is happening in diplomacy … world events can make a big difference… Because media are instantaneous, 24/7/365 there is not a down time. There is very little time to develop reaction to an event that is taking place sometimes thousands of miles away. (Diplomat 6)

> I don't want to use the word "battle," but we certainly have to compete with the popular culture, images and movies, which often times bear no resemblance to the Unites States' policy, or to the Unites States' people, but it doesn't mean that we don't have to live with the misunderstandings that are sometimes created by that popular culture. (Diplomat 6)

> I think that there are many other serious things that the Embassy does with the government. […] But at the same time, if the average Romanian on the street has no idea about what America is, what America is doing, and only knows America from movies and television shows, which portray America as entertainment not as reality, than we are really not creating a good long-term relationship, a relationship that is based on real knowledge of both countries. And that is going to have negative effects on relations. (Diplomat 3)

Culture congruency and United States' image

One element that recurred in almost each conversation with the participants in this study was the need to adjust the U.S. public diplomacy the Romanian culture. Cultural dimensions played an important role in the way U.S. diplomats were perceived in every

day interactions between the official diplomats and the members of the Romanian society. For example, for Romanians, who have a relative recent memory of the Communism regime, the word "official" still drags stiff connotations. In addition, having lived the period of Communism, older Romanians still perceived important to have a spokesperson for the entire society, a spokesperson who cannot be associated with the years of oppression and who could speak freely against the new political leaders. The group norms attributable to a collectivistic society like Romania, although diminished now, are still prevalent among the older generation that lived through decades of Communism regime. The following two examples, from participants that served in the early and respectively late 2000s are illustrative:

> In addition, Romanians put a lot of importance on the U.S. ambassador, because they were very unhappy with Nastase [Adrian Nastase, the Prime Minister of Romania at the time] and the government, and so they [Romanians] looked at the ambassador of the United States as kind of a moral authority, kind of "the stick to beat the Government with." We used to say that the U.S. ambassador was the third most influential person in Romania after the President and the Prime Minister. Our image was very positive and I think people respected our involvement and engagement. We used to speak a lot about corruption, and creating civil society. (Diplomat 4)

> In my opinion, you have to try to be yourself. You have to demonstrate qualities that people don't necessarily expect from American diplomats: accessibility, openness, frankliness, willing to try new kinds of things. I think all those qualities are really important. Willingness to participate, to join in, to be part of whatever the activity is, […] to laugh at yourself, I think is critical. And, if you do those kinds of things, then you demonstrate genuineness … because when people hear the word diplomat, they expect to see someone very straight-laced and serious. I think that that is the image, boring, too perfect almost. (Diplomat 6)

In conclusion, participants noted that building United States' image in everyday interactions and relationships with Romanians at all levels of society was "really not difficult to do." One participant described at length:

> I think people assume that you are going to be or have a sort of nationalist fervor or something. I think it is refreshing for them to hear that Americans are often times very critical of themselves, of their government, of their shortfalls of their society, but it is also worth the process to rectify that. Well, you learn a lot about your own country, I say, by living overseas and hearing what other people have to say and figuring out which of those things you think they are being correct about. Which ones you are willing to have a more heated discussion with them? And you can do that once you have established your relationship, where you can say, "Well I agree with you about this, but I disagree with you about that." And that is true on all levels on your relationship building. (Diplomat 6)

Bridging cultural differences in order to promote a positive image and reputation with the Romanian public was an important aspect for U.S. public diplomacy and consequently for U.S. diplomats. Overall, for U.S. diplomats who saw the foundation of public diplomacy built on open dialogue, bridging the United States and Romanian cultures was mostly based on universal human values, such as "accessibility," "openness," "frankliness," acceptance of new, and always with a sense of humor. According to U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania, promoting a positive image and reputation for the United States in Romania was a continuous negotiation at all levels of a relationship with the members of the civil society.

2. The concepts of trust and credibility

Two major concepts, trust and credibility emerged in the cross-sectional analysis as key elements in the relationship building process. Because participants referred to both in similar terms and in connection to each other, the concepts were analyzed in one major category under the relationship building function of diplomats abroad.

Research question 2: How do diplomats abroad build trust and credibility for their country in their relationships with the public of another country?

Invariably, participants agreed that the best way to build trust and credibility for their country in their relationship with the members of the Romanian civil society was through openness and truthfulness of messages about the United States. As shown in the participants' comments, the culture of transparency and delivering on promises started with the person "in charge" all the way to the visitors that delivered speeches. Participants noted that because "transparency was part of the message," it was adopted as a ubiquitous practice in all interactions and relationships with the foreign publics.

> When I was in charge, […] my policy was to basically tell the truth. […] I always felt that honesty is the best policy, because if you get a reputation of being fast and loose with the facts you don't have much credibility. (Diplomat 5)

> Trust is the most important thing. Never lie to anybody, always tell people as much as you can, as soon as you can, and be frank when you cannot talk about something. (Diplomat 6)

> You have to be transparent. When you go and talk with people you cannot have a secret agenda. You cannot be going and say to them: we would like to send you to the US on this event and what they get when they arrive to the US is propaganda. People aren't stupid. They go expecting to find what they were told they were going to get. [If they get] something different you loose credibility immediately. So you have to be very open about everything. (Diplomat 3)

> We want to be open for the discussion. We want to be transparent in every way that we possible can, so that people can see that that is part of our message. Transparency is part of our message. (Diplomat 6)

Participants also observed that one of the most important ways to build trust and credibility for their country in everyday interactions and relationships with Romanians was their willingness to discuss their country's shortcomings, and present a more realistic image of the Unites States and its citizens than the one people might have formed by being in contact with the broadcasted U.S. popular culture. In this context, one common element to all participants was the importance of advancing accurate facts about their

country. In their words, participants illustrated how they built trust and credibility in their relationships with members of the Romanian civil society – the words "open" and "honest" were the common denominators:

> I think one way is through openness. Open discussing the United States, being open to questions, [being] willing to discuss the United States as a country and the Americans as a people, and trough recognizing that the U.S. has flaws as a society, like any country does. (Diplomat 2)

> You build trust because you are honest with people about the positives and negatives. You don't have to run around pretending that America is perfect. We have to acknowledge what our strengths and weaknesses are. We have to acknowledge our history and the challenges that that provides us. (Diplomat 6)

> **…** we would bring speakers from the United States to give lectures and seminars. If speakers came to Romania and took a position that everything the United States government does is always right, it would be ridiculous, it would be unbelievable. So, they have to be honest, they have to be open, and they have to recognize that the United States government makes mistakes, like any other government, but that it does have a goal, it does have an ideal that is trying to approach. (Diplomat 2)

Another common element that emerged across the data when participants talked about building trust and credibility for their country abroad was reflected by the concept of involvement. Sometimes building trust and credibility for the United States in direct relationships with Romanians was through direct involvement in various activities and programs.

> I always told people: "Maybe I cannot always give you money, but I can give you recognition. I can get you to the cocktail parties with the ambassador, and you can tell your ambassador your story, I can put you in touch with Americans who do the same work, and might have opportunities for you to do something." And then you have to deliver. And then you have to make sure you follow up and actually do what you say you do. (Diplomat 3)

> … you had to have credibility, and credibility was in part based on your ability to listen and that you were going to perform. And by perform I mean, if it was a need, and you cared to assist, you intend to carry through and deliver on your promises. (Diplomat 5)

Participants contended that once involved in a relation with Romanians, they had to make sure they would carry through their side of the agreement, and not acquire a reputation of being "fast and loose with the facts," as one participant asserted. In this context, delivering on promises was an important factor in building trust and credibility for their country, which then contributed to a good reputation for the United States and its citizens in the eyes of Romanians.

3. The concepts of dialogue and communication

Research question 3: What is the role of dialogue and communication in building and maintaining relationships with foreign publics?

Participants in the study overwhelmingly agreed that there is one way to build relationships and that is through the use of communication, and by adjusting public diplomacy messages to reach the broadest number of people. As noted by participants it was important to continuously adjust messages to fit to the areas of interests of specific audiences, in order to have a constructive dialogue. Nonetheless, as it can be seen in the participants' comments, persuasion is always part of the equation: "You don't always have to use the hammer to have the nail go in" is an eloquent metaphor of a more sophisticated method of persuasion, which takes place with the consent of the participant(s) in the discussion through open dialogue. This diplomat further commented:

> The only way you can have a relationship with the public is to have communication with them. Public diplomacy is about communicating messages, and norms, and values about your society. At the same time you are learning and, therefore, you are adjusting your messages based on what you are learning from your audiences. So, if don't adjust public diplomacy, then we are really just talking to a very, very small narrow group of people. Certainly the last 20-25 years we learned that we do that at our peril. We have to be talking to a much broader group of people. (Diplomat 6)

> … we've been able to start a dialogue on a variety of things. We've been able to talk about issues in agriculture, economic development, in the area of civil society and society development – we have some robust discussions going on, and we work quite happily with government and non-government organizations, with the private sector, and we use a variety of tools. You don't always have to use the hammer to have the nail go in. (Diplomat 6)

One common element across the interviews was the importance of engaging the foreign audiences in a dialogue towards building long-term relationships, partnerships and collaborations. Participants acknowledged the impracticability of one type of communication, the "fits all" approach, and emphasized the need to adjust U.S. public diplomacy to the characteristics of the host country. According to the participants in the study, the methods of communicating with the Romanian populace have evolved from a "big microphone" to a "sustainable collaborative partnership." This comment is illustrative:

> We can sit out there in front of a big microphone and talk at Romania, [but] that will be of a very limited interest to people, particularly over time. Because if it is simply somebody standing in front of a microphone, even the best speech the U.S. ambassador might give, that's going to have some impact, but is not going to be sort of sustainable collaborative partnership that in a long term is going to be much more meaningful. … Otherwise, you would simply say: "here's the U.S. position, hope you like it. End of story." (Diplomat 1)

Overall, the cross-sectional analysis of data revealed that participants saw dialogue the foundation of a successful relationship based on communication. The examples and comments made by each participant indicated the congruency between communication and dialogue.

> Well, that is interesting, because I do not draw a conceptual difference between communication and dialogue. I assume that once you communicate you are in a dialogue, or you are in some kind of exchange of views that it could be [between] more than with two people, it could be with several people. You may have invited

> a group to come, and give you their different points of view on things, so that you can begin a program … (Diplomat 3)

The act of listening

Building relationships based on dialogue was paramount for U.S. diplomats in Romania, who recognized that the imperative need to be heard and valued is very much appreciated in Romania, as everywhere else. On hand, participants noted that the goal of listening was to persuade foreign audiences. In this context, listening and adjusting messages according to situational public was recognized as an important "factor in persuading people."

> That [listening] is extremely important. No one likes to be lectured to. People want to have dialogue. People want to have their opinions valued. They want to have their opinion considered, and being able to listen and to consider other peoples point of view is key to persuading people. A key factor in persuading people is to [make them] see things from your point of view. So it [listening] is very important. (Diplomat 2)

On the other hand, participants granted listening with the central role in building relationships with foreign publics based on dialogue. In this context, listening was viewed as a mean to achieve public diplomacy goals and to create an environment of consensus among the actors engaged in discussion. Participants identified listening and dialogue/communication as the two key elements in the process of building collaborative relationships, in which the foreign public was viewed as equal partner in a discussion:

> I think one of the things that is important about public diplomacy is that we don't come to the table automatically assuming that we have all of the answers. We may have a view that we would like for people to join in on, but we won't achieve that goal if we are not willing to listen to their opinions and answer their questions. I think that that the role of public diplomacy is to make sure that whatever the discussion is about that you are actually listening, that you are responding to what the other persons' concerns are. Otherwise, you don't have any chance to input things. They may not always agree with you, but they will

> listen to your point of view, and it will get calculated into their decision making, and that is really all that we can hope for. (Diplomat 6)

> For example, the political section spent half of its time doing nothing but talking with parliamentarians, and NGO folks, and historians and political scientists and journalists trying to understand Romania. Is that an outreach too, is that also communicating, I'd say most certainly it is, because when you engage in one of those conversations … you have a conversation about ideas. (Diplomat 5)

Across data, the use of listening emerged as a common element, and was illustrated in various examples. Participants further identified two additional roles for the act of listening in the process of the building relationships with the Romanian populace: (1) listening as a key element in building an argument, and (2) in engaging in mutual beneficial exchanges with the desired publics.

> The role of dialogue, as far as I am concerned is at the square one, is at the center. As I said before, if there was ever a time when it was OK for us to lecture, and I don't ever think that it probably was, it certainly doesn't exist now. Listening is half of the conversation. So, if you are only prepared to talk and never to listen, then you are not only going to miss out on a lot, but you actually short-changing yourself in trying to engage your audience, what their needs are, what their interests are, and what their points of view are. You cannot very well build an argument if you are only listening to yourself, sort of one hand clapping. (Diplomat 6)

> So, you are always looking for the opportunity for the mutual benefit and it wouldn't even be interesting for Romanians if all they were doing would be listening, and listening, and listening and not contributing to what is going on. (Diplomat 3)

New communication tools

When participants were asked "*what are the best ways to communicate with Romanians*," they acknowledged the importance of understanding the cultural customs of the host country, when seeking to communicate with the members of the civil society. The new means of communication such as the Internet, the instant messaging, and the SMS are mostly used in Romania for personal communication, and therefore if used as

mass communication strays from the customary cultural norms. Participants agreed that Romanians are "very personal" and therefore, the most prevalent cultural element in the Romanian society is the importance of personal encounters, "Nothing like looking somebody in the eye and shaking their hand," as one participant observed. Further, participants asserted that in order to build "meaningful" long-term relationships, Romanians prefer face-to-face meetings rather than impersonal messaging and communication through electronic means. The following comments illustrate the participants' view on the use of the new tools of communication vis-à-vis "person-to-person communication," as well as the significance of being able to overcome "the last three feet" in the beginning of a relationship.

> I am a firm believer that in the Romanian society – a lot of people use the internet here, but mostly for emailing, and obviously in Bucharest and other big cities, people send SMS and other kinds of messaging, but […] I think that still Romanians are very much personal. Personal connections are very, very important here, it is not just who you know, but is often the fact that you are out there, and people know you are making the rounds so to speak. That is in Bucharest and in all the other parts of the country. (Diplomat 6)

> … I think is true everywhere that people want to see you, they want to talk with you, they want to shake your hand, and they want to know that you are a real person, that you are not some distant voice, and I think that that is particularly important here. (Diplomat 6)

> My role would be to go out and meet with as many people as possible. That is the bottom line. The more people that I can personally meet with, and actually have a conversation, and then continue the conversation either by email or phone, the better I have to create relationships. We can all create relationships now by email or phone, but I find that the most important thing is actually to sit down with someone and listen to their story, and learn what it is that motivates them, they want to accomplish. Then, you have a much better opportunity for creating a meaningful relationship and one that is lasting. (Diplomat 3)

> Even though we are using all these electronic media and some people seem to be satisfied by the instantaneous ability to deliver messages, I am not sure how influential that is in the long run, in terms of long-term relationship building.

> Maybe that instant, initial access provides you with a foot in the door, but if we are going to have decent conversations with someone, you still have to have the person-to-person communication. And all the instant messages in the world won't get that for you. […] I am a big believer in the last three feet. (Diplomat 6)

However, an exception emerged when participants referred to the relationships with the representatives of the Romanian media, because in this particular case, the new media was successfully employed as a component of a professional relationship. Participants who worked with in the press section of the embassy recognized that they were somewhat restricted to communicating with the Romanian journalists. Nonetheless, communication with journalists was important not only to reach the masses with the most accurate messages, but also to give reporters the best access to information.

> It was extremely useful to us to be able to communicate to the newspapers what our goals were and just try to explain what was going on. Sometimes that wasn't just for the embassy, sometimes the most effective way of doing that was to use some of the communication that was relatively new. For example, we were able to set up from time to time digital video conferences, between high ranking officials in Washington and the media people. Not just in Romania but usually it was perhaps in several capitals in Europe. And Romanian correspondents, along with correspondents in those other cities all were permitted to ask so many questions, and then were listening to the other questions that perhaps the French, Bulgarians, and Polish colleagues would ask and they often would find that the same question they were curious about were object of curiosity elsewhere too. (Diplomat 5)

For participants who worked in the press office, their job was not only to make sure that "Romanians were being communicated by the media about the United States as accurate and truthful a way as possible without any kind of bias," but also to "trying to give people [journalists] a full range of information so that their opinion, their conclusions are well informed." Consequently, it can be inferred that diplomats in the press section view communication as having two functions, 1) as a goal to inform foreign public through media, and 2) as a mean to build relationships with journalists and to

create stability between the embassy and the media of interest in the host country.

Communication goals – finding the message multipliers

Participants in this study emphasized that the process of dialogue was not only viewed as a mean to build and maintain relationships with foreign publics, but also a mean employed to multiply the public diplomacy messages toward desired foreign publics. Often the goal of U.S. diplomats was to reach as many Romanians as they could, or to reach those Romanians that would play the role of "message multipliers." One participant described at length the role of dialogue in reaching "other people" that could carry on the message:

> Making that connection is part of my job. As far as I am concerned, a big part of my job is helping make these connections so that the public dialogue amongst our peoples can go on, and that it can deepen. It won't deepen as long as it is just means other American diplomats talking to Romanians, because we have such a shallow reach given that it is a few persons in the Embassy talking with Romanians. How deep into Romania can we reach? So we have to work through other people and with other people, in order to have the discussion, to make our point, to stimulate interactions between Americans and Romanians. (Diplomat 6)

> We are perhaps the sharp end of the spear but we are not much more than a point. Maybe we open the door to allow for deeper engagement, we may start a discussion, but if it ends with us, then it really may not have been very successful. So, at the same time we are certainly are trying to influence opinions. It'd be much better of if I had a lot more people having the discussion, so that a lot more people are influencing opinions. And we do that by sharing perspectives with a lot of people, and that is what I see the public diplomacy aspect is not just talking with people at the senior level, maybe me doing a little bit of talking, because as I said, we are the sharp end of the spear, but we've got to provide access and opportunity for a lot more people and stimulate a lot more discussion for public diplomacy to be effective, I think. (Diplomat 6)

> You have to pick either venues or audiences as subject multipliers, but we are also trying to facilitate other people having a discussion. We give a lot of small grants to NGOs, to educational institutions on topics that we agree on, for them to be able to do programs that will multiply our message 10 fold. (Diplomat 6)

The role of dialogue U.S. diplomats and members of the Romanian civil society was often contingent to the issue under discussion. In this case, a common element that emerged when trying to identify "message multipliers" was that dialogue was used with the scope of persuasion through ample discussions. The metaphor "we are the sharp end of the spear" (Diplomat 6) illustrate the fact that participants were "cognoscenti" (Diplomat 1) of their ability to "open the doors" and successfully "influence opinions."

Research question 4: What is the best way to build a dialogic relationship with foreign publics?

Participants agreed that a relationship based on dialogue has its foundation in the trust and credibility that was continuously developed between the U.S. diplomats and the Romanian publics: "It is important to be open, it is important to be accepting of divergent opinions, and it is important to be honest," said one participant. In this vein, another common element that emerged from the data was that the best way to build a meaningful long-term dialogic relationship with foreign publics is when the relationship has its foundation in the trustworthiness of all parts. Once trust was established, then a relationship could develop. According to the participants, the communicative aspect of a relationship should take the form of a discussion with a friend "around the kitchen table:"

> You have to establish credibility with your interlocutor, which means you are heaving a conversation which is something like the one you have when you are around your kitchen table with a friend. Now, he/she is going to open up to you because you established a degree of trust, one hopes, and then it [the relationship] is also communicative. (Diplomat 5)

Changing the venue of the embassy

This major sub-category emerged when participants talked about the strategies employed to build dialogic relationship with the members of the Romanian civil society. Participants suggested that the best way to build relationships based on dialogue was to change the venue of the embassy. In addition, the U.S. diplomats had to move their office into street, coffee shops, theaters, professional conferences, festivals, or any other cultural or sports events, in order to meet with foreign people in places comfortable to them. Given the way officials or diplomats are viewed in Romania, it was obvious for the participants that regular Romanians would not knock on the embassy door to meet with U.S. diplomats. Rather, it was the U.S. diplomats who had to "go out and meet people." The following comments are most illustrative of the way U.S. diplomats built dialogic relationships with the members of the civil society while serving in Romania:

> Well, everything from very informal, where you talk with people at a movie theater, a sports game, or a supermarket where you have chance [to start] conversations, all the way up to delivering formal speeches to groups. So it is a spectrum of ways that go from ….just [being] out on the street [where] you are just talking to people… [to being] invited in your professional capacity to talk on behalf of the US government in a very formal way. (Diplomat 3)

> [We] should do more in public, talk to people, be public about things. But it is simply a matter that if you are going to be effective, and I think this is the more important part, if you are going to be effective, as a diplomat – US diplomat, or other kind of diplomat … you need to be out there, speaking in public, engaging people, doing things that have a kind of symbolic and hopefully positive content in ways that are visible. Because you're just not going to be effective otherwise. (Diplomat 1)

> Another way to meet people is when they are going to events where they take part. Let's say it is a convention of English professors where every year in Timisoara, the university would hold a regional university meeting of university professor of English. And I would go, because I would know that at least a hundred professors of all over Romania would be there, and it would be a fantastic opportunity for me to meet them, talk with them, find out what they are

> working on, whether they have connections to the US already that maybe we could assist, deepen, etc. (Diplomat 3)

Participants noted that one key target audience for the United States public diplomacy programs in Romania was identified in the group "youth between 13-25 including students." Engaging with students, as well as English teachers was equally important for U.S. diplomats in Romania. This initiative was part of the outreach program developed by the United States embassy in Romania, and it was considered a way to open avenues of dialogue with "subject multipliers" (Diplomat 6). In addition by changing the venue of the embassy into the classroom, U.S. diplomats were able to present another facet of a diplomat, demonstrate that they were "human" (Diplomat 6) and be able to have an "open dialogue:"

> If you are going to deal with school kids or university students, you need to demonstrate your openness, likeability and accessibility that you can poke fun at yourself that you can demonstrate that you are human, that you have the kind of concerns and issues that they have. Then it is much more likely that you'll have an open dialogue. It means that you can talk about hard things, if you already talked about some of the things that are easier. (Diplomat 6)

> I used to speak at school groups and universities. […] That was public outreach. I went to the [Bucharest] University, and I was very impressed with students at the public university… and I met people that way. (Diplomat 4)

> Teachers are one of our principal avenues. One of our many avenues […] is English teaching, which allows us to talk about a lot of things that we think are important […] whether it's talking about civil society, civic education, or whether it's teaching tolerance in school, or whether it's about some American holiday, each of those could provide us an opening to talk about things that we have in common, and things that we do differently. And those things are important, because it is important to recognize differences in the context that we have more in common than we have differences. (Diplomat 6)

Overall, the importance of building relationships based on dialogue was recognized by all participants, and was illustrated through numerous examples. A

common element was identified in the importance of being able to communicate in ways that were not available during the Communism regime, of being relevant in the society, and especially of being able to reach the youth with public diplomacy messages. As noted by participants, the importance of dialogue/communication, listening and credibility in building relationships with foreign public was "naturally critical:"

> I think is naturally critical. […] Maybe we are now making differences in countries we never were really able to before, because we could not communicate very well with each other. Now we can. And so, it is critical that our messages goes out to the broadest number of people, that we have a chance not to just talk at people but talk with people, and to have discussions with people. That is absolutely critical. We cannot rely on the old style of diplomacy where governments made agreements and then they sort of expected the people to believe that they were all doing "God's work," so to speak. It is not how it works, it never worked before, and certainly it doesn't work that way now. (Diplomat 6)

> We have to make sure that we keep our message relevant to them, and at the same time ensure we are listening to them about what is important. […] and if we are not aware of the fact that we are competing with a lot with other people for influence here then we are sadly mistaken. We have to be relevant, we have to be reaching out to a younger generation, and we have to reach out with relevant, interesting materials … otherwise … nobody has to come and listen to us. Nobody has to make themselves available to us to be able to have that kind of a conversation. Therefore, we have to put a lot of effort into it, and we must continue to do that if we want to continue to have influence here and be welcomed. (Diplomat 6)

Another interesting element that emerged from the analysis was the participants' tone of voice when they spoke about Romanians. As each participant described the relationships they engaged in or facilitated with Romanians, their voice and attitude changed over time (chronologically speaking) from U.S. diplomats who served in early 2000 to those who served in late 2000. As viewed by U.S. diplomats, participants in the study, the Romanians' genuine interest in learning new things was visible from one day to another. If after the Revolution, Romanians were eager to learn and absorb

information about everything that was new to them, toward the late 2000s, they became more sophisticated, and their overall worldview had changed, as their access to information became ubiquitous. The following two comments were made by participants that served in Romania in the early and respectively late 2000s.

> During elections we met a lot of people, groups of students interested in being elections observers, […] or young people that wanted to learn what was democracy about. And you would talk to these people, and sometimes you realize, you say "not much there there" maybe they were not very good, they were not very energetic, and then suddenly you'd go "Wow, where did you learn that?" Maybe one day they just learned about something and they decided they wanted to do something for themselves. (Diplomat 5)

> No matter what you think your expertise is, it does not do any good to assume that you know more than the person that you are talking to, because you are always surprised as just how broad other people's knowledge base is and what their interests might be. So, my feeling is that we always need to come to discussions with the assumption that we are talking with intelligent people who if given time and enough information can come to intelligent assumption. (Diplomat 6)

As it results from their comments, the adjustment of their opinion toward the Romanian populace over the course of less than a decade is rather spectacular.

4. The concepts of network and relationship

A major category that emerged from the cross-sectional analysis referred to the concepts of network and relationship. According to the participants in the study, this aspect of United States' public diplomacy in Romania revolved around a) identifying the target audience, b) defining the two concepts, c) identifying the best strategies in building networks and relationships with foreign publics, d) identifying the roles of U.S. diplomats in the relationship building process, e) analyzing the relationship building function of U.S. diplomats, and f) investigating the relationship management function of U.S. diplomats abroad. Two interesting elements were identified in this category that of the

importance of public diplomacy programs in building relationships, and the significance of the Romanian staff in building networks in the civil society.

Research question 5: How do diplomats abroad build and maintain relationships with the foreign publics?

Research question 6: How do diplomats abroad build networks within a foreign civil society?

Identifying the targeted audience

In communal agreement participants noted the challenges of identifying the targeted audiences with which the embassy and the diplomatic staff intended to build relationships and networks. "It is pretty challenging because the State Department doesn't provide individual embassies much money for research," one participant said. For U.S. diplomats working abroad, the significance of identifying the appropriate audience was an essential component in the success of public diplomacy initiatives.

> Because we don't have in any given embassy a big research arm, we would rely on public opinion polls, in particular the ones that are more professional and sounder to get insides into the audiences out there. But we were always conscious of the fact that there were lots of complex ramifications in the audiences. (Diplomat 1)

Romania' social context and the specific issues of interest for the U.S. embassy guided the diplomatic staff toward the audiences of interest. The challenges U.S. diplomats encountered in the early and respectively the late 2000s shifted from trying to fix internal social issues common to a period in transition such as corruption and the democratization of social institution, to recognizing the maturity of civil society and its new challenges.

> That is an interesting question. I think what we do is we first look at what are US policy goals and in attempting to attain those goals we look at the society where we are based and the government that of course exists and try to determine the best way those goals can be obtained. […] For that particular narrow issue [i.e. the military] I don't think landed so much to identifying broad sections of society, [but on the broader] issue of corruption and democratization, in order to identify audiences who might find them appealing, frankly, we talked with student groups, business groups, foreign business people doing business in the country, and all sorts of media outlets. (Diplomat 5)

> This is not 1989. The times have changes, our audience has changed. The average Romanian student either doesn't know, or couldn't care about the Revolution, in my opinion. It is a historical artifact. Most of them were not born at the time. […] who we are dealing with now is the NGOs, educational institutions that are not neophytes in this regard anymore. (Diplomat 6)

The complexity of selecting the targeted audience came when diplomats abroad sought not only to communicate with foreign populace, but rather to build significant long-term relationships with specific academic, professional, scientific, or business communities. Participants recognized that in order to reach the targeted audience it was important to identify the opinion leaders, people who have influence in their group or social sphere. These opinion leaders were persons of interest for the embassy such as, 1) a well known journalist, in order to reach media representatives, 2) a teacher who could reach other teachers or students in the classroom, or 3) a well known woman, who could reach and empower other women. Participants contended that, after identifying the goal of a public diplomacy program, American diplomats had to identify the people interested in the issue on "which you wanted to do programs." These following examples provided by participants describe at length this process:

> Initially, the public with which we typically intend to identify is groups of people who have influence. Now, that can be anybody from high school students who are going on to college al the way to the top officials of the government, [or] it can be NGOs if they are working in the field in which you want to conduct a program. (Diplomat 3)

> I think the first think you are trying to do is identify what your objectives are. You look at your mission strategic plan and you have your particular objectives, let's say assistance for development of civil society. So first thing that you do is trying to identify who are the influential parties in Romania who are interested in that discussion and are either multipliers or influencers in their own right, and then you begin to have your discussion, and at the same time you are looking to bringing American individuals or organizations who have interest and expertise to bring to the table. So, you are trying to build the discussion. (Diplomat 6)

> Typically, you would conduct events that are for specific interests. So, for example, if you are conducting an event [directed at the media], then the group you want to identify is either journalism students or those working in news media. It might not be the actual journalists; it might be the editors, or owners of newspapers, but something in that field. And similarly, if you are trying to work on a program for women's empowerment, you wouldn't just want to ask [to participate in the event] any women, you would want to ask women that have some influence. So, it would be teachers, or university professors, because they affect the lives of many children, or young people that they teach. It would be women that are in government, who are leaders in the private industry, or other women who have simply become leaders of the community. For example, it could be a top writer who everyone reads, or a television personality that everyone watches. So, what I would say is, you identify people basically, based on the issue with which you want to do programs. (Diplomat 3)

By late 2000s, the first encounter between U.S. diplomats and the representatives of the Romanian civil society has changed. One participant explained:

> They are looking for us to partner with them, but they are not necessarily looking for us to lead. […] But do they have to have our assistance to decide what it is they are going to do? No, that is not true. People come to us, organizations come to us and provide us proposal, and ask for assistance. They want to know if we want to partner on things, and that is very different that it was 10 or 15 years ago, when we were the ones going out and saying "we want to do this, do you want to join us?" We still do that to some extent, but it is much more likely that NGOs and individual organizations are coming to us and say "we have a good idea, what do you think about joining us?" (Diplomat 6)

Another interesting aspect regarding identifying the targeted audience in Romania was contingent on the country's location, and most importantly its membership in the European Union. This is specifically true, for countries that are part of the European

Union, where it is usual that members of the civil society of two or more countries work together on common projects. In this context, U.S. diplomats acknowledged the difficulty of identifying the targeted audience within the borders of Romania, given the fact that networking can be even more difficult when people of more than one country are interested in working together on a given issue. The following comments illustrate the challenges of U.S. diplomats in identifying targeted audiences in Romania:

> But the reality was that that the people that were interested, sometimes in issues that we were working on, and not just within the borders of Romania, and increasingly of course that's true in every domain. So we would probably, depending on what the issue was, be thinking in very specific terms, as much as we could, in the constraints of time, and resources we had in front of us about specific audiences. (Diplomat 1)

> There is no single audience anymore. There isn't even an audience of three categories as 1) elites – traditionally people would talk about elites and decision makers, and then 2) university audience, journalists and 3) the general public. And I am not saying that there are not still people that operate with that kind of a framework in mind, and sometimes is not irrelevant. But now, even when we're just talking about bilateral relationships, and increasingly this is Romania and European Union is very much this type of space, you're talking about audience that often goes beyond the borders that are fragmented and specialized in ways that we never had to think about it and deal with. (Diplomat 1)

Defining the concepts of networks and relationships

Most participants in this study draw a distinction between relationships and networks, but at the same time saw the intertwined associations between the two. Therefore, during the interviews participants were asked additional questions that allowed them to refer to each concept as they preferred. The question was: "*do you perceive any difference between the concepts of networks and relationships?*" The subsequent answers revealed participants' perspective regarding the two concepts, and expanded the discussion into each participant's worldview. However, the cross-sectional

analysis revealed that participants' views on this matter were rather similar, "Relationships tend to be one-on-one; networking is a whole series of relationships" (Diplomat 4). The following examples describe in more detail the similarities and differences between these two concepts as noted by participants:

> A relationship is an individual point on a web, while networks are the web with which you connect the individual points and how you relate it to each other. Obviously you work on relationship building with both individuals and institutions, but at the same time, you are trying to… I think we're using public diplomacy for two things. One is to help bringing people together to connect the dots, to become the strings between the dots, either between Romanians who don't know about each other existence in the professional field; and two, at the same time, trying to connect them with counterparts in the United States. So, I think that relationships and networks are different, but they are certainly connecting. (Diplomat 6)

> A network would be a large group of people that you are acquainted with. Simply acquainted with. Not anyone necessarily that you work with closely. Relationship is somebody that you work with closely. (Diplomat 3)

Strategies to build relationships and networks

Regardless the fact that these two concepts were perceived differently by the participants, U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania described the strategies for building networks in similar ways to those pertaining to building relationships. In this case, participants recognized that the best strategy to build relationships is to "simply being engaged with people," or "getting around talking with people." Although each participant provided his/her own experiences contingent of the position held in the embassy, these examples have a common denominator in the fact that, in order to "foster long-term" changes in the Romanian society, U.S. diplomats sought to build relationships with foreign people who have "similar visions," or are "like minded people" (Diplomat 1) or people within the same professional field as the U.S. diplomat who initiated the

contact. For example, a press attaché would seek to build relationships with foreign journalists and ultimately develop a network of "like minded journalists" that are sympathetic with the United States goals, whereas a cultural attaché would seek to build relationships with members of the artistic community and create a network that would include various artists or cultural institutions.

> So, we would … naturally gravitate towards working with non-governmental organizations that share similar visions within Romania. … Much more significant is working with a much broad coalition of like minded people. In Romania, you're much more likely be able to help foster longer term, more sustainable reform, of more positive changes, through that kind of approach. (Diplomat 1)

> Well, there's various ways. Is useful to visit some of the news outlets, from time to time, the TV stations, and the newspapers to get to know individuals there. Another way is by assisting journalists who want to receive some information from the embassy; perhaps some journalists who want to interview our ambassador for example, that's another way to get to meet people and build relationships. (Diplomat 2)

Public diplomacy programs as strategies in building relationships/networks

The importance of public diplomacy programs in meeting people was recognized by all participants in the study. One participant noted, "One of the benefits of having the American Corners is that I get to go and meet people all over the country." Overall, public diplomacy programs allowed diplomats to meet Romanians, talk with them, and build relationships and ultimately networks. The programs initiated by the embassy provided diplomats the flexibility to travel the country and engage with the members of civil society, from artists, to journalists, to business people, and elites. In their words participants explained:

> I found to be one of the most enjoyable things I did, but it was a question of time. You have no idea how much work there is. It was fun. It was fun, because I have to say, I met so many wonderful people who just wanted to do something better

> for the kids, for themselves, for their country. They were from all ethnicities, and I knew people from all walks of life from artists, to opera singers, to dancers, to gypsies, to priests, to ordinary shop clerks, and then the elite as well … [and] you say "I can't believe what this person is doing," and you just wished you had more time to work with some of them. (Diplomat 5)

> There's also various programs that we have. […] That was also a way we could meet journalists, get to know journalists, by interacting with people that came to these events, lectures, seminars, or the speaker program. (Diplomat 2)

> We have eight American Corners in Romania, one here in Bucharest and seven in other large cities, and we use those to reach out to those communities personally. Officers, not just the public diplomacy officers, but everyone from the ambassador down to most junior officer, is encouraged to participate in programs taking place at the American Corners, … and I would like more of them, so we could do more of them, but the fact of the matter is that we reach a much larger audience than we would have if had only one office in Bucharest. If we had no way to reach audiences in Cluj, Timisoara, Iasi, Baia-Mare, Bacau, Craiova, or Constanta, how would we regularly be able to talk with them? We do that now, through the American Corners at these library counties, and by sending people there, we give advise, by sending officers there, by sending speakers from the Unites States there, we do that by hosting video conferences with them, which means sometimes between them and somebody in Bucharest, sometimes with other parts of the world, depending where the expert happens to be. (Diplomat 6)

The Romanian staff as a strategy to build relationships/networks

Another common denominator across the interviews was the importance of the local staff to assist the U.S. diplomats in their everyday interactions with the members of the civil society: "We need people to know the local environment," commented one participant (Diplomat 2). Another participant noted, "The Romanian employees are vital. That sounds like the most important thing to say, but there must be a more important way to demonstrate it," said another participant (Diplomat 6). The following comments are most illustrative:

> Our local employees are in fact the "life blood," they are the institutional memories. They are truly professional people, who have fantastic contacts, great insight. I would never consider a program, consider an activity that hasn't fully vetted with my staff, because they are going to tell me "Good idea, but it will

> never work" or "Good idea we've got to try, but we have to do it in a very different way than your initial proposal" or "It's a terrible idea that will never work". We need their professional frankness, as well as their knowledge and their ability to bridge the gap, institutionally and culturally, between Americans and Romanians, they have a foot in each camp so to speak. I know that is true with all the offices in the embassy, but public diplomacy simply could not, absolutely could not function in an effective manner without our superb local employees. Absolutely could not. (Diplomat 6)

> But we also used our embassy staff. Embassy staff is essential, and the press section has some of the best people in the embassy, who give you a broader feel of what is going on, at least in the electronic and print media. (Diplomat 5)

> What I would say is, when hire local people, they usually are coming from a different job, and they have their own network that they developed over time. Let's say we hired and English teacher, the English teacher knows many other English teachers from her many years of teaching. So, that is one of the first ways of developing a network is to hire somebody that already has a network status. (Diplomat 3)

> Each and every one of them is a professional; each brings different strengths and knowledge to their jobs; and we are blessed by people who are dedicated to their work. They are trying to better their own country, and they are willing to use us to do it, and we are willing to be used. But in a very positive way. We have a symbiotic relationship that works for both of us. (Diplomat 6)

> But another way [to build relationships] was, through our Romanian employees who know many people. [For example] I would have meetings with my staff, and I would tell them: "Look we don't really have anybody in the field of modern dance. Does anyone here know anybody in modern dance?" And actually, somebody did! (Diplomat 3)

The axial analysis revealed that the Romanian staff assisted with an array of activities, (1) the daily monitoring the Romanian media; (2) translating official documents, broadcasted political shows, or daily conversations with Romanian encounters; (3) advising on programs that would work in the Romanian society; (4) assisting in identifying and developing relationships and networks with both members and representatives of the Romanian civil society; and (5) acting as cultural liaisons between the U.S. diplomatic staff serving in Romania and the civil society.

Research Question 7: What are the roles diplomats in the relationship building process with foreign publics?

The exploratory work of diplomats abroad

As noted by participants, the U.S. diplomats abroad have to have an exploratory nature to be able to build relationships and networks in foreign societies. Participants enthusiastically illustrated the enterprising role of the embassy's personnel in identifying the members of the Romanian civil society with which U.S. diplomats intended to build relationships.

> In a place like Romania it was very interesting because the society was developing really rapidly, and a lot of exciting things were happening. Not just people starting business or starting local schools, or whatever they were doing, but also they were starting NGOs. And NGOs didn't exist under Ceausescu. So, how did we choose to talk to, or how did we choose to make our message known, I mean we were always in an active exploration, I guess you can say that, because we were forever running across, or having people call us up and say "Would you meet us? We'd like to talk and tell you about our goals." (Diplomat 5)

> Then another way [to build networks] would be to go to the top, to the heads of organizations: "Hi, here's some of the things we are doing. Are you interested?" And if so, "Can I go out and meet with some of the people in your network and see if there is something we can do for them outside Bucharest. In other words, begin to develop person-to-person relationships with other heads of groups: 1) it could be the regional teachers' administrators; or 2) mayors of cities who we would like to help develop a sister city program with the US. So, these would be some of the typical ways to develop networks. (Diplomat 3)

> Well, I think that in every public diplomacy operation we have, what I call, a toolkit – a lot of things you can do if you have an array of tools. From time to time when I talk with my colleagues and other pros I say, "Gosh, I wish we could do this or that […] Is there an approach?" Yes. […] We have our audiences, we have our tools. We are trying to incorporate new technologies that are appropriate here, we are testing … we try out new things: if they work fine, if they don't work, than we put that back in the toolkit and say, "it doesn't work now," or "it doesn't work at all," and then we try something different here. A lot of action, a lot of activity to get people involved, that is one of the things we find the people are most attracted to. (Diplomat 6)

> And I would try regardless, but you wouldn't always…you know, you drill for oil and out of ten times you drill maybe one or two wells would actually have oil in them. In a way, is the same with being a catalyst. You try to make matches, you try to set up relationships, but they don't always work. For some reason or another, they just don't catch fire. (Diplomat 3)

One common element across the interviews were the metaphors and vivid examples each participant used in order to describe their work in Romania. These examples show U.S. diplomats' efforts to initiate relationships with the members of the Romanian civil society, from just "knocking on CEO's door," or developing "person-to-person relationships with heads of groups," or just try to make matches between Americans and Romanians, until some of them would "catch fire."

Relationship building function of diplomats abroad

The question asked: "*how important was it to build relationships with the representatives of the Romanian civil society.*" Responses revealed that building relationships with members of the Romanian society has emerged as one the most important functions for U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania. One participant said, "that is a very important aspect of the work of the Embassy; that would be part of my work" (Diplomat 2). The strategic aspect of building relationships with the foreign publics rested in diplomats' ability to "open" democratic channels in countries that only recently have broken away from the Communist regime. Twenty years from the fall of Communism, participants noted the embassy and its diplomatic personnel's continuous effort to embark on the process of facilitating or building relationships between U.S. and Romania at all levels of the society.

> [We] cannot promote stability in a country simply by saying, "OK they had free elections. Great. And that is a change of party. That is very nice." Real stability in a country comes from the development of the civic society, where the people

> participate in their government, they read newspapers, they hold their elected officials accountable, and they do some things for themselves, they don't wait for the government necessarily to do everything for them. That is how you build stability in a country. You give it strings that are bellow the level of the national government, so that if the national government is in grid-look, or it is not performing as well as it might, the other organizations that are basically democratic, that people can rely on to make things to continue to work in their society. So, that is the underlying goal of everything that we were doing in Romania. (Diplomat 3)

Participants noted that the underlying goal of building relationships with the foreign publics could not have been possible if it was not congruent with the overall U.S. public diplomacy goal of building relationships in Romania. In this context, U.S. diplomats' view that the foundation of meaningful long-term collaborations and partnerships between the people of the two countries lay in the common interests shared by "like minded people" (Diplomat 1). The following examples, reveal the adjustment made by U.S. diplomats in identifying the common interests between the Americans and Romanians, in a society that was in continuous transformation.

> Find some commonality that allows you to develop a relationship, and then you may find that you have other common interests that you were not aware of. So, whether that is through teachers or school kids, or whether it is through politicians or military people, you are always looking for intersections of interests, so that you can try and see whether or not there is some reason to develop a relationship beyond that. (Diplomat 6)

> People come to us, organizations come to us and provide us proposal, and ask for assistance. They want to know if we want to partner on things, and that is very different that it was 10 or 15 years ago, when we were the ones going out and saying "We want to do this, do you want to join us?" We still do that to some extent, but it is much more likely that NGOs and individual organizations are coming to us and say "We have a good idea, what do you think about joining us?" If it is an area than we have an interest in it, then we will likely try and partner with them. And I think that that shows maturity in terms of developing programs they think will work in the Romanian context, as opposed to some American coming in with some "great" idea. (Diplomat 6)

Another development in participants' examples was the collaborations between the United States' embassy and Romanian non-government institutions representative of the Romanian civil society. U.S. diplomats initiated collaborations with NGOs that further assisted the embassy to successfully execute public diplomacy programs in Romania. Participants' illustrative descriptions of partnerships developed between the United States embassy and Romanian NGOs revealed the embassy's network status.

> We did deal with NGOs who deal with journalistic issues, there are some NGOs who monitor the news media in Romania, NGOs that deal with human rights, or interested in freedom of the press. We were able to get to know those people and it was important to establish these relationships, because building, strengthening democratic institutions was one of the primary objectives of the embassy. And also, it was a useful source of information, because we need to know the state of the situation regarding freedom of the press in Romania. We need to do an annual report about human rights in Romania, so that is a useful source of information. So, it was important to build these relationships with civil society, and it was I think beneficial in both ways, mutually beneficial. (Diplomat 2)

> The reality is that, if you take this approach, towards public diplomacy, towards promoting a positive climate in a relationship, you have to be willing to give up a measure of control. … So, the understanding is that if you are working in a coalition of NGOs on a common goal, there's going to be some give and take. (Diplomat 1)

> We would occasionally bring speakers to Romania and we would need institutions or organizations to host those speakers, we would need information about what was going on in a particular sphere, in new media, of course one main focus, we would be calling on these institutions, on these NGOs to provide us with information. Sometimes, we were able to assist some of these organizations in their work, if they were doing an annual report. (Diplomat 2)

Another common element that emerged from the axial analysis was the importance of building personal relationships between U.S. diplomats and the members of the societies in which they serve, "I would say it is absolutely the most important thing. No question. That is why I am there. That is my top goal" (Diplomat 3). Participant recognized the significance of being able to pass beyond the cultural

differences and transform simply encounters with foreign publics in meaningful relationships. However, the social, economic, and political chasm between the United States and Romania posed additional challenges in establishing relationships. One participant' sensitive comment is illustrative for the early 2000s.

> In Romania, sometimes, [it] can be difficult to develop really personal relationships because there is a very strong economic gap between us and them … and I came to the conclusion sometimes, that there was this very big chasm between us as Americans and them, you know, dealing in a post Communism society, with all the economic hardships and medical hardships and everything else, the family hardships that people would have. (Diplomat 4)

U.S. diplomats' participants in this study explained that the reasoning of building personal relationships in Romania had its origins in the need to overcome an important cultural norm identified in the Romanian society. As participants noted earlier when they referred to the new tools of communication, vis-à-vis person-to-person communication, in the Romanian society it was very important to overcome the "last three feet" between the diplomat and the members of the Romanian civil society. According to the participants, one way to do that was through personal contacts/relationships. Furthermore, personal relationships provided diplomats credibility in the group or circle in which they desired to enter. "Romanians are very much personal, personal connections are very, very important here," observed one participant (Diplomat 6). This comment is of particular importance, and it is based on another cultural characteristic specific to the Romanian society, which is reflected by an important truism "you are who you know," or "you are who your friends are."

> It was absolutely essential. It gave you credibility. Because you cannot go in a place like Romania and say "I red about this once in a book" You got to be able to say "I talked with so and so, and I saw this with my own eyes, and I know this is

> happening" and people in the civil society were the ones who cold tell you about these stories and who could guide you to meet the experts. (Diplomat 5)

> Your personal relationships provide you the entrée to ask the kinds of questions and get the kind of advice that you need in order to make informed decisions or recommendation to your superiors. If you are only operating from a completely American point of view, then you are going to make a hell of a lot of mistakes. You have to overcome your own biases and you are not able to do that if you don't have individuals in the local community who are willing to give you their frank opinion. (Diplomat 6)

In addition, personal relationships proved to be valuable commodities in times of an emergency for the United States' embassy. This unexpected facet of the significance of building personal relationships with foreign publics was illustrated with enthusiasm by one of the participants:

> For instance, we were at the one year anniversary of September 11, and the ambassador had asked for a symphonic concert…so, in early August, the new public affairs officer [who was my boss] asked me: "Do you have any contacts? What can we do?" And I said "Well, I know people at the *Bucharest Philharmonic*" It was three and a half weeks before the first anniversary of September 11, and I worked with the Bucharest Philharmonic, and we put on a concert with very, very short notice. It was pretty good and it got national coverage. Iliescu [Ion Iliescu, the president of Romania at the time] and the American ambassador both got on the National Television before the concert started live. It wasn't in my area, but it was nobody else [who] could do it, because I had the contacts ... that were my own personal contacts. (Diplomat 4)

An unexpected finding was given by the importance participants placed on institutionalizing personal relationships within the embassy. Participants constantly referred not only to the personal or professional relationships they were able to establish and maintain, but also to the "predecessors' relationships" already established by former embassy personnel within the Romanian society. This is an important finding that reveals U.S. public diplomacy's emphasis on maintaining and expanding already established relationships within the Romanian civil society, so that they can later be built

into large long-lasting strategic structures of relationships and networks. One participant explained at length:

> I think I had a good run here. I've been able to get out and meet a lot of people, establish new relationships for us to include in our activities, to be included in their activities. But at the same time, while the last three feet is important, you cannot always depend upon me as an individual because in the end I leave. And, as I often tell my American colleagues, your contacts are not your personal contacts. You make friends, and then your contacts belong to "Uncle Sam." He pays you to establish them, and to maintain them. And as a result, when you leave you need to figure out a way, and it is usually through your local employees, to try and maintain that relationship that exists with the institution, with the Embassy, or the office of public diplomacy, with the mission of the United States in Romania. So that good work relationship that I have can continue, even if I am long gone. And after [I'm gone] the relationship has to continue, and obviously is through people, but it has to be an institutionalized relationship. (Diplomat 6)

U.S. diplomats and the relationship management function

This section addresses the question: "*Have you ever found yourself acting as the manager of the relations between U.S. companies/institutions and Romanian counterparts*?" The axial analysis revealed a communal approach to the management function for U.S. diplomats in Romania. That is, participants did not perceive the relationship management function as one that would fall under their responsibilities. In addition, participants conveyed that in general the function of managers of relationships was not only incongruousness with their overall functions abroad, but also was not considered a priority when they thought about their interactions with the foreign populace. The common denominator across interviews was that once a relationship was established, the diplomats should "get out of the way" and give independence to the parts in administrating their own relationship. In their words participants explained:

> … whether they [relationships] are in judicial, law enforcement, military, education – all of them are intersections that ensure that we are having a dialogue by bringing Romanians and Americans together around common interests. And

> that is what public diplomacy does, in my opinion – promote that dialogue, bring people together, and then get out of the way. Let them have a conversation that needs to be had. (Diplomat 6)

> Only in rare cases. We would prefer not to be the managers, we would prefer to be either the facilitators, or engaged in. And the reason we don't want to be managers is that it puts to much responsibility on us as takes to much time. We would rather catalyze and monitor than manage. (Diplomat 3)

> I don't know that I am managing somebody's relationships… (Diplomat 6)

> I wouldn't use the word manager, but it is something that we should promote. It is something that if we could help make these connections, help promote these linkages, then we should do what we can to make that happen. And then, hopefully both sides will be able to work out to cooperate without us being involved. (Diplomat 2)

These comments show that the U.S. diplomats interviewed in this study did not view the management of relationships as one of their diplomatic functions abroad. However, in communal agreement, participants preferred to be rather "engaged in," or "facilitate and catalyze relationships."

> I think we're using public diplomacy for two things. One is to help bringing people together to connect the dots, to become the strings between the dots, either between Romanians who don't know about each other existence in the professional field; and two, at the same time, trying to connect them with counterparts in the United States. (Diplomat 6)

The fact that U.S. diplomats serving in Romania took a more limited view of their role in relationship management is a significant finding that challenges the general perception existent in the literature. This finding will be discussed in detail later in this paper. Nonetheless, it is important to note that according to participants, U.S. diplomats' main function in Romania was to establish and develop personal and professional relationships and further capitalize them as institutional relationships. As part of the United States fundamental mission in Romania, the embassy' web of institutional

relationships was further developed into long-lasting strategic structures that established the embassy as a social, cultural, professional, and business network in the Romanian civil society.

5. The roles of facilitators and catalysts for diplomats abroad

Another major finding revealed by the axial analysis pertains to the two primary functions for U.S. diplomats abroad, as they were presented by the participants in this study. These are:

a) The roles of facilitators of relationships between the members of civil society they represent, and the members of the society in which they serve

b) The roles of facilitators and catalysts between the representatives of the host country and their government

A communal element across interviews was represented by the similarities in the approaches and strategies diplomats employed when they embarked on their roles of facilitators and catalysts. As participants noted, this process is constructed on three main steps:

1. First step was to identify key publics (people and institutions) in the Romanian society with the potential and willingness to establish and maintain collaborative relationships. At the foundation of this first step were (a) the embassy's public diplomacy programs and (b) the already established embassy's institutional relationships.
2. Once the possible target was identified, the second step was to identify its needs and specific areas of expertise.

3. Third, given the key publics particular interests, American diplomats proceeded to identify counterparts in the United States interested in establishing and building relationships with Romanians. As participants noted, their role was to facilitate and/or catalyze a potential long-term relationship based on communal interests.

This process, however, could also function the other way around, if a private or non-governmental U.S. organization was interested in building relationships with members of the Romanian civil society.

Research question 8: How often [if ever] do ambassadors and other diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between representatives of the civil/business society of their country and their counterparts in the foreign society in which they operate?

It was with great length and enthusiasm that participants talked about their roles of facilitators and catalysts between representatives of the United States civil society and Romanian counterparts. Participants recognized their new roles as facilitators and catalysts to be central to the development of long-term relationships between the people of the two countries.

> …and I went to see some of his work … and I talked with him, and we arranged for meetings for him with other American [counterparts]. And so, over time, we developed an understanding about the things he most wanted to do, and the things we most wanted to do, and we found a common ground to develop a relationship. (Diplomat 3)

> For example, when I see that there are maybe opportunities between two libraries that otherwise do not know each other, but both have something that they share they both benefit, I'll put them together. And that requires no money at all, just the knowledge of the country, the knowledge of the people, the sectors, and the willingness to act in a positive way to bring them together. And that is the catalytic function, and I would say that that was half my job. … [it is] important to facilitate relationships – to identify and facilitate relationships and act as catalyst. (Diplomat 3)

Each participant described how he/she employed the outreach programs of the specific sections of the embassy to identify potential members/institutions of the Romanian civil society to facilitate relationships with U.S counterparts that could develop in productive long-term collaborations and partnerships. The various examples provided by participants include the cultural, scientific, and the academic communities, the journalistic field, and the U.S. business enterprises in Romania. The following comments are most illustrative.

> So we put this guy [a theater director and manager] in touch with the ones that we knew about in the US and said: "You talk to them, and then come back to us to us and let us know which one you think are going to be the most valuable to you and we'll work with them." So, again, this was a catalytic role, where we did not manage the relationship, we let him do the actual connection. And eventually he did, and eventually he found one or two [American counterparts] that he felt would be really helpful and we either sent him there for him to talk with them, or brought them to Romania for some kind of activity. (Diplomat 3)

> … we had a number of programs that sent some Romanian journalists to universities in the United States, and I think they [American universities] made a good job in establishing relationships with Romania, with [the] Romanian journalistic community. I believe that this is something that is being continuing. I would not say that I was the first person to ever establish this contact, [but] I would say that the fact that I was able to send some Romanians there [to visit American universities] helped strengthen the relationship between the American university and the journalistic community in Romania. (Diplomat 2)

> Yes, if we ever got request from [American] companies interested in doing business in Romania we would develop programs for them to meet with the kinds of people that they would need to talk to, in order to create new business, or make investments, or export to Romania, or whatever the business that they wanted to do was. But there is a limit with what we can do with each American business because we are not permitted to show favoritism to any one particular US company, but we were able to do as much as we can, once again facilitate and catalyze relationships that can then turn into good opportunities for American and Romanian business people to work together. (Diplomat 3)

> So, whatever it is, [for example] scientists who deal with the prevention and treatment of pandemic disease, because everybody is at risk with things, like avian flu, swine flu, and so on, … and putting more Romanians in touch with

> Americans on this and working out networks … we would try to find more candidates in everyone of our programs, from just visiting to all the way to Fulbright to bring more of those people together, develop more relationships in the academic, professional, and scientific communities. (Diplomat 3)

It is also important to note, participants' tone and enthusiasm when they described how they engaged in facilitating relationships between the members of the two countries that could advance the professional, cultural, or scientific communities.

Adjusting the daily agenda to the new roles of facilitators and catalysts

The overall engagement with the Romanian publics had to be managed by each participant into his/her daily routine. Regardless the position held in the embassy, U.S. diplomats were invariable complaining of the limited time allocated to meet with the Romanian representatives and facilitate collaborative relationships.

> … I also had the management of the embassy to do, I also had to make sure that the reports we were sending back to the United States about the state of affairs in Romania were correct. […] When you are talking about communication to Romanians you have to understand we were also very busy talking to Washington and the United States. (Diplomat 5)

> You end up wishing you could have done more, but part of it is the time constraints, the bureaucracy of running your office, or you don't have all the financial resources that you had liked to. (Diplomat 6)

Further, participants were asked to quantify the time spent facilitating or catalyzing relationships between the people of the two countries. The responses to the question "*How often*" were various. For example, participants that served merely in the press section explained, "Hard to say how often but it was a fairly recent occurrence" (Diplomat 2). In addition, participants that served in the press office provided few instances in which they played the role of facilitator, especially because press attaches' facilitating role was constrained to working with the media people.

On the other hand, participants that worked in other sections of the embassy, offered considerable increased number of situations in which they acted as facilitators and catalysts. For example, according to participants that held the position of public affairs officer or cultural officer, they were able to spend more time embarking on the roles of facilitators or catalysts of relationships between the members of the two societies. At the same time, participants that held positions of chargé d'affairs or chief deputy of mission acknowledged that being a U.S. diplomat abroad means being divided between administrative activities and participating in public diplomacy programs. One participant described the embassy's bureaucracy.

> We were trying to put public diplomacy in the context of the overall work of the embassy. It is certainly important, but a great deal of our time was also spent informing Washington and our decision makers about the importance of Romania, because let's face it, Romania was not well known. And, to inform Washington the best we could about the various settleties about your political system, your politicians and the views of the population. Because again, it comes from being Ceausescu era, when you were so well insulated from the outside, we had a lot of work to do, just to explain Romania to America. And so, whereas we spent a lot of time communicating with Romania, we spent an equal amount of time communicating with Washington and the United States about what we saw you were all about. (Diplomat 5)

Further, to better understand the diplomats' functions pertaining to the relationship management process in Romania, the following questions was asked: "*Which of the following verbs would you consider most appropriate for the U.S. diplomats in Romania: "engaged in", "facilitate," or "manage" relationships with the foreign public? "*

With unanimity participants concurred that the most appropriate verbs for U.S. diplomats in Romania were, "engaged in" and "facilitate." The probe question followed: "*How often would they find themselves 'engaged in' or 'facilitating' relationships with*

Romanians?" As noted by participants, the time each diplomat sat aside for interactions with Romanians varied across the section of the embassy. The overall sentiment among participants was that U.S. diplomats spent more time "facilitating" relationships than "engaging in" personal relationships with Romanians. The following comments are most illustrative:

> I would say … half of my activity [of interacting with Romanians] consisted [of] going out, talking to people, finding out what their interests are, deepening relationships, maintaining relationships, creating ways of getting people together with very little money. (Diplomat 3)

> I think is probably engaged in … and facilitate – it depends. […] The dialogue that takes place and the experiences exchanged, and in that case we are "facilitating" the relationship between an American and a Romanian. So, there are cases where "engaged" is appropriate for us, and I think that is effective for us to engage audiences and then engage the dialogue with Americans and then get out of the way. (Diplomat 6)

> I think you're probably engaging, because you are looking to multiply, you are probably engaging 20 to maybe 30 percent and facilitating, maybe 70 to 80 percent if you are doing your job properly. We don't have enough people to be able to do much more than that. (Diplomat 6)

As noted by participants, diplomats' practices changed over time. If in the early 2000s diplomats were more "engaged in" relationships with Romanians, by the late 2000s, the main function was to "facilitate" relationships between already established private or non-governmental organizations and their U.S. counterparts. This again, revealed a Romanian society in continuous transformation, which in change demanded constant alteration of public diplomacy programs and consequently of diplomats' functions.

> At the time I found myself in Romania we were sort of engaging, and by engaging I mean finding interlocutors, finding common ground, finding ideas that we can share and develop mutually with the Romanian public. […] As that became a bit clearer to all parties, then you end up being more of a facilitator, because you

> find that you now are talking to people that perhaps had formed their own NGOs, become more sophisticated about how they see the world, and what Romania … needs for itself. (Diplomat 5)

Research question 9: How often [if ever] do ambassadors and other diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between community groups and government representatives within the foreign society in which they operate?

Not only participants embraced their roles as facilitators between the people of two countries, but they showed the same enthusiasm when they talked about their catalyzing role within the Romanian society. When asked about the frequency with which participants embarked in facilitating and catalyzing relationships between community groups and their representatives at the local or national level, they invariably responded: "I'd like to think that, that happened many times" (Diplomat 1).

According to U.S. diplomats' participants in the study, one of the public diplomacy goals in Romania was to assist Romania and Romanians to create a democratic society based on "the rule of law." During 2001-2009 Romania has changed substantially, but according to the participants, the involvement of the U.S. diplomats in assisting Romanians remained constant over these years. A former U.S. diplomat who served in the late 2000s explained:

> I guess that 6 months after I got here, Romanians joined the European Union. There really isn't quite the same backdrop, as it was for those who served here before I did. We still talk with Romanians officials and the general public as well, about the issues that we think are important: rule of law, transparency, a lot of it having to do with the building of the civil society, about having a judiciary that it is independent. Those are the things we're going to continue to talk about as long as there are problems here. (Diplomat 6)

Other participants noted, "We were on their side" (Diplomat 5), or "I think people respected our involvement and engagement" (Diplomat 4). These comments are

illustrative of the continuous assistance given to the Romanian populace and shows U.S. diplomats' participation in the reconstruction of the civil society. The continuous changes in the Romanian social and political environment during 2001-2009 forced U.S. diplomats to adjust their new roles of catalysts or facilitators of relationships within the Romanian society. One participant explained,

> [In] many of these countries in Eastern Europe, Romania included, you had a whole sell replacement of many people in the bureaucracy, and at first they didn't know what they wanted and they needed engagement to help sort of define what they were, who they were, what they wanted. And then, once you found where was the new leverage of power, where was the interest groups, where were the NGOs, you can begin to facilitate. (Diplomat 5)

As participants noted, Romanians understood that the country's "officials are influenced not just by the greater public, but also the small audiences. They were aware of the need to be activists in that regard," said one participant (Diplomat 6). Participants revealed a sense of pride to have participated in the reformation of the Romanian civil society. The following examples are illustrative of the way U.S. diplomats viewed their roles of facilitators and catalysts between the Romanian civil society and the Romanian government.

> I think this is the kind of newer approach of diplomacy that I am talking about, public diplomacy and diplomacy as a whole. I can think of it in Romania, where it was a matter of bringing Romanians together, around a common goal or objective. (Diplomat 1)

> We're trying to be as honest as we possible can and, in the meantime, we're trying to work on those issues what we think are shortcomings. Some are not only for government to solve, the civil society has to participate, so we work with NGOs, researches, business community, and other organizations to try and achieve a common goal, and we'll continue to do that. (Diplomat 6)

> We were trying to reform the community itself from the inside, as well as raise the awareness, hopefully make more Romanians sensitive to the concerns and perspectives of the Rroma community. So we were acting as a catalyst for, what I

> think were good things in Romania. By virtue of demonstrating our interests and doing some things, that [for example] might be a lunch with the ambassador, might be a conference or seminar that is the way things changed and happened in real world these days. And exactly that catalytic effect that we seek [is becoming] increasingly is the brad and butter of what we are trying to do in public diplomacy. (Diplomat 1)

Further examples of the "bread and butter" (Diplomat 1) U.S. public diplomacy activities in Romania provided by participants revealed diplomats' involvement in building communities, and their assistance to help them become independent from government funds and further develop in ways characteristic to a capitalist society:

> There were a lot of civil society building programs that we promoted. Basically anything that helped to develop voluntary organizations, that helped to improve the quality of journalism, the ability of civic sector, the private sector to find its own programs – not to have to always turn to the government, for it to build, what exists in US very vibrant and healthy private sector. (Diplomat 3)

> … this guy in Iasi […] had a camp for underprivileged poor children, who did not have many opportunities at school, or at home to develop their skills. So, I called him up, and I went to visit. […] Eventually, with funding from the Embassy he enlarged the camp and brought more children in. […] He developed programs that were little scientific projects for each of the teams, and he brought the children to the capital, and the president of the country was one of the people who served on the board which selected the winner. So, we were able to work with him to develop a new program that got not only the attention of U.S. Embassy, but also of the top officials of the country. (Diplomat 3)

A common element across the interviews was the overall attitude among U.S. diplomats in Romania who strived to insufflate the sentiment of "empowerment" within the local communities and assist them in their development by employing means available to them.

> What we were looking to do was to begin to develop communities of volunteering organizations that actually could make a business plan, identify sources of funding, even if they were small, but still get some accomplishments, and then use that accomplishment to go and look for better opportunities for funding. We wanted to empower and "abilitate." (Diplomat 1)

> We were helping people in the community. I think that as we were working on programs to try to raise awareness of the importance of the Rroma community, and working together with the Romanian government and Romanian NGOs to open up opportunities, particularly for people, younger people, we were helping them by virtue of our interest to connect to people in the Romanian government. I think over time, some pretty senior Romanian government officials ended up being [not only] partners of ours, but partners for people in the Rroma community, and particularly younger people, who were more reform oriented in the Rroma community. We found that we were helping Romanians network. (Diplomat 1)

> The mayors of a certain province […] although they are interested in tourism, they are [also] interested in different kinds of tourism because their cities have different particularities that make them interesting. So, you need to hear from all of them, and the mere factor they all get together gives some of them ideas about how they can work together to improve their tourism industries. So, you get to benefit from their point of views in developing your program, but they also get the benefit of all working together and sort of beginning a network of their own. (Diplomat 3)

This analysis revealed that the recurrent functions for U.S. diplomats in Romania were those of facilitators and catalysts, "You know what; I find that I keep coming back to acting as a catalyst and a facilitator," commented one participant (Diplomat 3) near the end of interview.

In addition, participants noted the important role played by the U.S. embassy in assisting Romanians reform their country, their society, and themselves.

> I think that on the whole issue of democracy building in general and also economic reform, public diplomacy had a great role to play. I think that our speakers, both from the Embassy and guest speakers some from the United States, some from abroad, the debates we had in the press, our conversations with reporters, decision makers, I think helped speed up the process of democratic and economic reform. (Diplomat 5)

Overall, participants asserted that with their help and assistance, Romanians were able to rebuild their civil society, and accelerate the democratization of their society and

institutions from "Oh my God, what is going to happen to us now," to "This is what our country means and wants," as one participant (Diplomat 5) expressively said it.

Public diplomacy as diplomacy of deeds

The third major theme evident across the interviews was the "deeds" aspect of public diplomacy that went beyond the scheduled programs and official activities. "I would call these deeds to be "humanitarian" or "humanity," one participant (Diplomat 6) said.

> Diplomacy of deeds is part of public diplomacy […] I think diplomacy of deeds is sort of putting your actions where your rhetoric is. (Diplomat 6)

According to U.S. diplomats formerly serving in Romania who participated in this study, diplomacy of deeds revolved around two main categories:

1) The government-to-people diplomacy that referred to the projects funded through the embassy on one hand, and the grants allocated to numerous NGOs or private individuals on the other hand.

2) The people-to-people diplomacy that developed as an alternative activity apart from the embassy's public diplomacy initiatives and programs.

1. Government-to-people public diplomacy

As noted by participants, diplomacy of deeds described "funded public diplomacy," "assisted projects," "sponsored programs," or simply "grants." Two participants who tried to quantify their "funded activities" said that almost half of the "facilitating" activities were targeted toward a) providing funds aimed at the development

of various individual projects, or b) facilitating Romanians' access to specific embassy or private grants.

Overall, participants took pride in being able to facilitate these funds which contributed to the development of a "program that needed immediate assistance," such as the reconstruction of a church, or conservation of historical artifacts. The following examples are illustrative of some of the deeds U.S. diplomats facilitated between the embassy and members of the Romanian civil society:

> Let's say, the *Village Museum* needed somebody to help them preserve negative photographic images that were taken in the 20s and the 30s by a Romanian ethnologist who went out to the country side and photographed traditional dancers, traditional costumes, traditional everything. And, at this moment in Romania's history, when modernity was catching up and the very traditional lifestyle of the people in the countryside was changing … he [a Romanian restaurateur] wanted to record this for history before it was lost. These images were beginning to decompose, because they were just on film, and the museum needed somebody to help them do that. Eventually we got them not all the money they needed, but enough [so] they could start [the project] and make other requests, or apply for other grants for the rest of the money. And it worked. They were able to preserve these images. And the program went on after I left. It started while I was there, but they were still working on it when I left, and my successor in the job had to take over. (Diplomat 3)

> I would never forget finding funds for some repair work at the very small church in the *Historic District* of Bucharest, which needed repair to the bell tower. Its bell tower has become very old and it started to fall apart, and we were able to find some money for the priest to hire someone to do the work. And the priest managed to do the entire thing in three months and it was perfect … it was absolutely amazing… it was beautiful. I saw the finished work and we walked through and the contractor was able to do even more than they promised with the same amount of money. And it was extraordinary. It was really one of the most amazing outcomes, the reconstruction. If I'm ever going to go back to Bucharest, I am going back to that church to see how it looks today, because I was so amazed, so positively affected. I never seen anything worked so well so quickly. (Diplomat 3)

> The only example I could give you is the Getty Art Conservation Trust and the Hurezu Monastery. I knew the people at Hurezu Monastery which was West of Bucharest, and they were renovating the Church and the Iconostasis, and I was

> able to get them an award from the Getty Art Conservation Trust. It was the first ever grant by the Getty Art Conservation Trust in Romania. It was for $30,000 and I helped them prepare their proposal plan, which was the interface with the Getty Art Conservation Trust. […] These grants are difficult to get. They are competitive. […] So, that would be the best example that I could give you, where I was the interlocutor. (Diplomat 4)

Participants also acknowledged that sometimes it was the embassy's interest in a project or in a community that generated attention, intervention, or assistance from the Romanian government or non-governmental institutions. The mere presence of a high ranked American diplomat was sometimes enough to stimulate public's interest and promote a cause.

> … a small factory – may be to grandiose word, outside of Bucharest, where light modern wheelchairs were built by people who were handicapped and custom made for them in a sensitive way. I was asked by USAID mission to go out there and provide visibility for that because they were doing good work out there. That is a fairly routine, but cumulatively these things we believe that they were important, to demonstrate that we are interested, we are trying to make a contribution, in the case of Romania's reform, helping Romania to move foreword, now as a full member of NATO and the European Union, very much as a partner. (Diplomat 1)

> I never in my dream I would think that I'd be running with an Olympic gold medalist. It is a good example of some of the things that we would do. […] And frankly, running with Gabi [Szabo] was related in a sense with [the] long standing work that USAID mission has done, as well as our public diplomacy section has done, in terms as trying to be supportive where we could of "Youth for Preservation and Sports." (Diplomat 1)

Both the allocation of funds and U.S. diplomats' involvement in unique projects were part of a larger assistance program which was a component of the public diplomacy initiatives in Romania. The embassy's approach to diplomacy of deeds has evolved from the early 2000s when U.S. diplomats' activities focused on assisting Romanians rebuild their society as a whole, to late 2000s when U.S. diplomats partnered and collaborated

with Romanians on specific actions or projects. The following two examples are illustrative for the early and respectively late 2000s.

> … when you have a large budget you can do many more things that are visible. That get people from all walks of life and all parts of the country involved with the US Embassy, in a very positive way. After I left, Romania joined NATO, joined the EU and it was considered what we would call a "graduated country." It was determined that it no longer needed the same level of assistance, and so the program money that I had was cut dramatically and the number of programs, the number of project, the number of things we could do to be visible in Romania reduced significantly. We could still play the catalytic role, we could still play the role of facilitators of relationships, but without the ability to do some programs – to capture the attention of people … because you have the capability to actually make something happen. (Diplomat 3)

> We were in a position through our USAID program to tap into humanitarian relief money, to do that, to show our interest, show our concern, make a contribution to the flood relief effort, and we did it in a way that - we had an opportunity to show that we were interested and we wanted to help. So, that is one type of engagement. Our assistance program, whether that is the humanitarian program or other longer term collaborative program that USAID used to have, those are tremendously important from a public diplomacy standpoint, because they really speak to the notion of partnership what is, what we were always trying to be, and expand while we were there. (Diplomat 1)

As noted by participants, the embassy's capability to give away small grants, whether it was for humanitarian relief in the case of flooding or for the development of small private initiatives, the diplomacy of deeds was always present in the overall embassy mission in Romania. During 2001-2009, U. S. public diplomacy undertakings in Romania were characterized by three developments, "You can think of it as three legs," one participant (Diplomat 3) explained.

1. Small projects with NGOs, part of public diplomacy projects. These projects would be too small for AID to be bothered with. […] Public diplomacy [sought] to find the small programs that would have no value if they were not done now. So, it gave us the flexibility to do something that it would have a reasonable impact, but not huge.
2. Very large development projects conducted by AID. For example, AID would create a new sector in Romania of micro-loans that would go to a

bank that has a lot of branches. AID role [was] to find the large sectorial development.

3. Peace corp. They of course, are working at the very lowest level at the grassroots level and their work is more along the lines of providing expertise, knowledge, and encouragement – and very little money. But giving people the understanding and the confidence to be able to do something with the materials that they have. (Diplomat 3)

By late 2000s, with the ascension in NATO in 2004 and in the European Union in 2007, Romania was considered by the United States a "graduated country" (Diplomat 3). As a result, in 2008, the USAID program in Romania was officially closed. However, Romania was still part and could participate in the regional USAID program administered and funded "out of Washington which carries out joint programs within this region" explained one participant (Diplomat 6) who served in Romania in the late 2000s.

> There are still several offices within the mission which still have SEED funding, which is the same funding that USAID had in Southeast Europe to develop democratic institutions, etc., and the public diplomacy office still has some of that funding as well. We use that mostly to promote civil society, civic education, involvement in civic society, or doing things on assistance on disadvantage groups, and that is not just somebody that is handicapped, could be minorities, youth leadership and also environmental awareness. A lot of these are targeted at younger audiences, but not only. (Diplomat 6)

Participants noted that the U.S. embassy in Romania will continue to engage in public diplomacy initiatives until all aspects of the society meet the international norms.

> […] there are lots of aspects of society that do not meet the norms of the European Union: particularly the rule of law. The rule of law' shortcomings tend to affect lots of other things: corruption, transparency, these things impact everyday life, economic development." (Diplomat 6)

2. People-to-people public diplomacy

Another side of the "humanity" diplomacy is played out by the private sector. According to the participants, the number of private deeds cannot be accounted for by the United States mission in Romania, but its presence is felt at the grassroots level. As part

of the U.S. public diplomacy initiatives around the world, U.S. humanitarian initiatives in Romania include individual private funds, non-governmental organizations, or simply U.S. citizens who are involved in charitable projects in various rural areas in Romania. One participant commented:

> I think that a lot of the things that particularly Secretary Rice talked about were really, "what is it that Americans are already doing in a variety of nations around the world?" particularly with the private individuals, which could mean the private sector in terms of businesses, but often times private individuals, who are donating time, and funding and their expertise in order to help a fellow human being. (Diplomat 6)

Some of the grants that participants referenced were donations made by U.S. citizens. These individual deeds happen for various reasons. One participant explained:

> [These] Americans have an attachment to Romania for one reason or another. Maybe they have history here, maybe their family was from here, or maybe they came here years ago, and maybe their church, or their organization continued to develop relationships with a school or with a university, or with an organization, local government or a community. (Diplomat 6)

> So, whether it is doctors who are donating their time … doctors who go to the Suceava area [a county in North-East of Romania] they work with a particular group of folks up there. They come from Kansas City, and they do surgeries – mostly facial reconstruction and other kinds of things like that – to children who have been burned or had other kinds of problems. (Diplomat 6)

These "true deeds of humanity" never receive very much official recognition because they are difficult to quantify. Diplomacy of deeds is a part of a large grassroots activity between the two countries. Participants noted that "thousand of things" such as activities, sponsorships, grants, donations were initiated every year by U.S. citizens in Romania independent of the embassy's work. As defined by participants, diplomacy of deeds is public diplomacy with small 'p' carried out by regular people. People-to-people public diplomacy takes place at a more direct personal level between the people of the

United States and Romania, apart from the official conversation that is taking place between the two governments, or between the U.S. government and the Romanian populace.

> So, are those public diplomacy activities? I think they are, but it is public with a small "p," the real public that is doing them. It is not the government working with the public; it is the public working with the public. It is a very different equation, but both advance the conversations and relationships between our peoples. (Diplomat 6)

An interesting aspect was raised by a participant with regard to public-to-public diplomacy initiatives, who suggested that in the future, the embassy should to be able to "leverage those activities" so that, by "bringing them to the attention of wider Romanian population, to demonstrate that there is a broader interest here," that "we have more things in common that just the two governments are talking with each other" (Diplomat 6).

> Not that we run around and beat our chests, saying "aren't we being wonderful to do these things," but rather how do we make people aware of these people-to-people programs, so that, people are aware that it is not just a US government that is engaged with Romanians, but average Americans are also engaged with Romanians in lots of different ways, concrete ways. It's not just the talking, so to speak, what happens with the government, but is public diplomacy in action. (Diplomat 6)

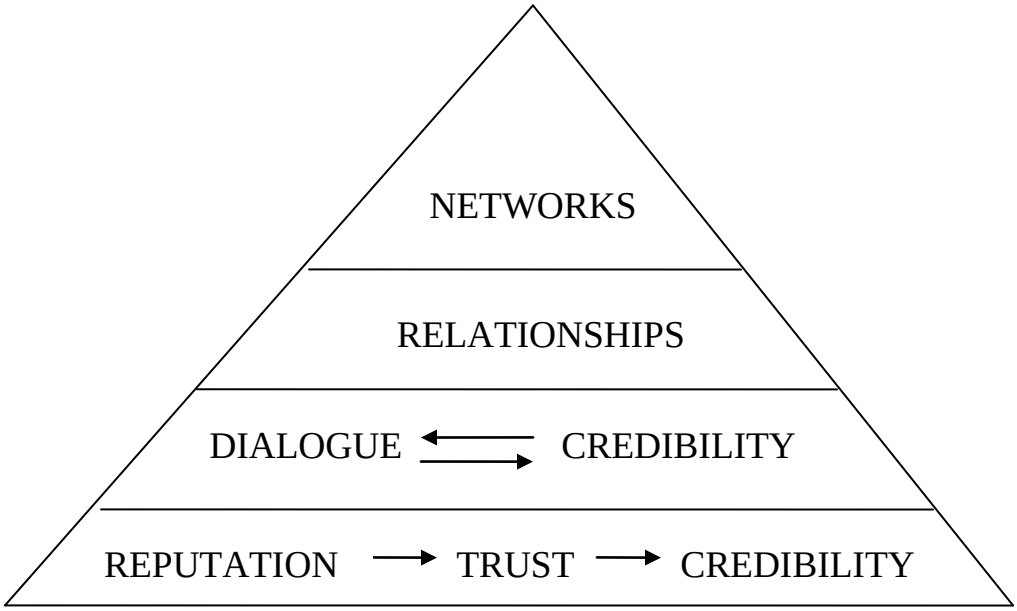
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand how U.S. diplomats build and manage relationships with members of Romanian civil society. As the literature reveals scholars in public diplomacy and public relations noted an increased emphasis on the relational aspect of public diplomacy and as a consequence public diplomacy scholars proposed different variations of a network model of public diplomacy (Hocking, 2005; Leonard & Alakeson, 2000; Manheim, 1994; Metzl, 2001; Zaharna, 2005) and public relations scholars (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005) called for a new paradigm that would focus on the relational component of public diplomacy.

The findings show that under the relational paradigm, the goal of successful public diplomacy is the establishment and development of networks in a foreign society. This study argues that to achieve the ultimate goal of public diplomacy, it is important to understand the process that generates the production of relationships and ultimately networks. Consequently, this dissertation proposes a new framework for public diplomacy practices under the relational paradigm (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

The framework of public diplomacy practices under the relational paradigm



This study found that at the foundation of successful public relations practices lie a country's *image* and *reputation* with the publics of another country, as well as diplomats' ability to build *trust* and *credibility* with the members of the host country. In the context of relationship management process, *reputation* is the precedent of *trust* and trust is considered the precedent of *credibility*. *Dialogue* is an intrinsic element in successful public diplomacy practices and was identified by both public diplomacy and public relations scholars. This study confirms its pivotal role in the practice of public diplomacy. The anticipation and identification of congruent interests is one of the most important functions of diplomats abroad, which can further transform simple encounters in successful partnerships and collaborations. These partnerships and collaborations built on communal interests and are prerequisite for successful *relationships*. Further, mutual-

beneficial long-term relationships are predecessors of *networks*, which are the ultimate goal of public diplomacy under the relational paradigm.

The findings show that the relational dimensions proposed in this study characterize public diplomacy practice under the relational paradigm. Moreover, these dimensions reflect the uniqueness of the relationship management process between any two countries in the world. These relational dimensions considered to affect the process of relationships building in the host country were viewed as essential elements in the practice of U.S. public diplomacy in Romania.

Hence, an interesting finding was revealed when participants referred to Romania's post-Communist cultural, economic, and political environment. The findings show that the social and political climate of the host country is imperative to the practice of public diplomacy. In the case of U.S. public diplomacy in Romania the positive climate of the overall U.S. - Romanian relations served as a productive basis in which U.S. diplomats built or engaged in collaborative relationships, or facilitated meaningful partnerships between the two countries at the social level.

There is little doubt that that one of the most important functions of U.S. diplomats in Romania was to establish or facilitate the establishment of relationships between the representatives of two countries. In either case, this study found that the process of relationship building rested on a rather straightforward process: 1) Identify the target audience (people or organizations); 2) Identify its interests; and 3) Build direct relationships or facilitate mutual and beneficial relationships.

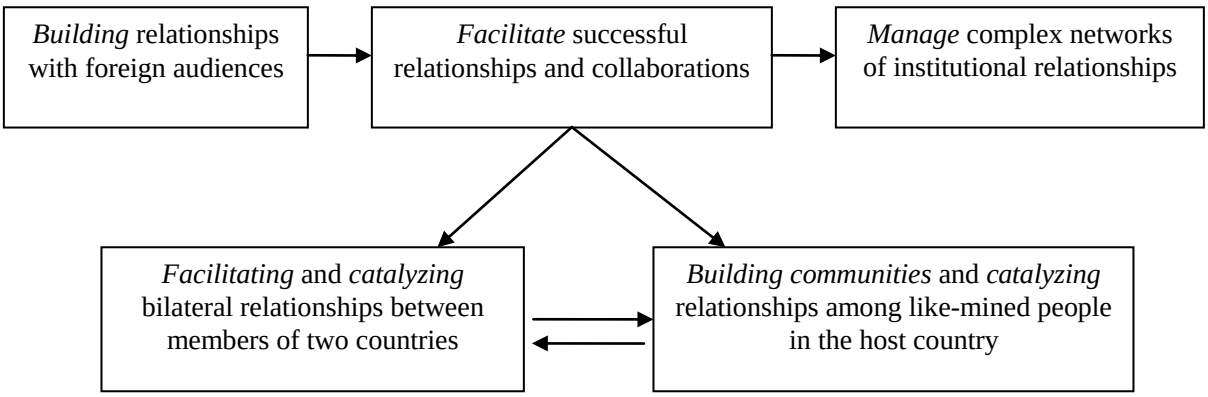
In the context of Romania's continuous changes toward a capitalist society, U.S. diplomats had constantly adjusted their approach to the relationship management process.

The findings show that, (1) in the early 2000s diplomats view their role as (a) mentors helping Romanians understand their country's place in the world of nations, and (b) as "the face" of the United States, when they engaged in direct relationships with members of the civil society. (2) However, by the late 2000s, diplomats' role in the relationship management process has transformed from mentoring to facilitating. Diplomats' roles of facilitators were two-fold (a) on one hand they sought to facilitate and catalyze bilateral relationships between U.S. citizens and Romanians, (b) while at the same time they continued to be engaged in direct relationships with Romanians and assist them in building communities of like-minded people within the Romanian civil society.

Under the relational paradigm this process can be conceptualized in a new model for building and managing relationships in post-Communist countries in which the civil, cultural, economic, and political constituents are undergoing vigorous transition toward a capitalist society (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2

The relationship management process of public diplomacy in Romania



During the first step, diplomats engage in direct relationships with the members of the host country with the goal to identify professional and social leaders. In a society in transition like Romania, this process of identifying opinion leaders is far from being completed in a few years or even a generation. However, once an adequate number of people of interest is identified in the host society, the following step for U.S. diplomats is to facilitate bilateral relationships between members of both countries that could transform into successful collaborations or long-term relationships. These two steps of *building* and *facilitating* relationships with foreign publics continue in concert, until the transformation of the host society achieves a level of development in which the personal-professional relationships between the diplomats and foreign publics can be institutionalized and capitalized, and further built into large long-lasting strategic structures. Lastly, during the third step, diplomats do not need to reach out into the society to build or facilitate relationships, but rather *manage* already established institutional relationships between countries that operate at the same developmental stage, because management is what you do when you got an establishment toward relationship where you understand each other" (Diplomat 5).

Another important finding that expands the relationship management process of U.S. public diplomacy in Romania pertains to diplomats' roles of facilitators. This study found two additional roles for U.S. diplomats, those of (a) *facilitators and catalysts of bilateral relationships between members of two countries*, and (b) *catalysts of relationships within the civil society, which would ultimately build communities of like-minded people* in the host country. The success of these two distinct developments makes a country's public diplomacy practices possible. In the case of U.S. public

diplomacy in Romania, the success of diplomats' roles of facilitators and catalysts will ultimately enable U.S. public diplomacy in Romania to achieve its final goal of creating and managing widespread networks of relationships among like-minded people and among institutions with similar interests. The findings illustrate that when shared interests grounded in the commitment to mutual benefits are the basis for public diplomacy practices, public diplomacy functions as a community builder. The community building role of diplomats abroad enables a continuous expansion of the embassy' social, professional, and business networks, which in turn advances the embassy to a network status in the society in which it operates.

Viewed under the relational paradigm, U.S. public diplomacy practices in Romania are progressively advancing toward the management of complex institutional relationships/networks. In the management stage of the United States - Romanian relationship management process, U.S. diplomats will not need to reach out into the society, but rather manage already established institutional relationships between two countries that operate at the same developmental stage. Furthermore, establishing the embassy as a network hub in the Romanian society will enable U.S. public diplomacy in Romania to operate at a management level.

This study built on Fitzpatrick's (2007) suggestion that under the relational paradigm, the relationship management function will encompass all diplomats' efforts abroad. However, this study found that the management of relationships takes place only when the interacting societies are at the same level of development. From the relational worldview, this study shows that diplomats are the essence of the underlying energy that augments the dots on an invisible web of personal, professional, and bilateral

relationships between the members of two countries. Consequently, the relationship management function of diplomats abroad is contingent upon the host country's level of development.

CHAPTER VII: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Theoretical implications

Ledingham (2003) viewed the relationship management theory in terms of managing organizational-public relationships around communal beneficial interests. In a similar view, this study revealed (1) the applicability of the relationship management theory in public diplomacy practice, and (2) illustrated that the transferability of the relationship management theory of public relations to public diplomacy is natural, given the necessity of direct management of complex networks of relationships at all levels of an embassy. If the thrust of public relations is transferred to public diplomacy, then under the relational paradigm of public diplomacy, the thrust of public diplomacy should be building and maintaining relationships in order to promote mutual understanding and beneficial partnerships between and among governments, citizens or non-governmental organizations and their foreign audiences.

The application of the relationship management theory to public diplomacy allowed a new perspective on different variations of a network model of public diplomacy. Under the relational paradigm, this study identified a new development in the relationship management process, that of building communities of like-minded people in the societies in which they operate. This finding augments the various proposed network models of public diplomacy existent in the literature and argues that under the relational paradigm, this is one of the most important steps in achieving the goal of public diplomacy. Furthermore, in the final step of the relationship management process, the

management of long-lasting relationships between members of two countries would broaden the embassy' social, professional, and business networks and will advance the embassy to a network status in the society in which it operates.

This study is significant because it builds on prior research by explicating the relationship management function of U.S. diplomats operating in post-Communist Romania. The contribution to public diplomacy theory goes beyond the initial attempt to help practitioners understand the relationship management function of diplomats abroad. This study tested the applicability of the relationship management theory to public diplomacy by proposing a new relationship management process unique to U.S. public diplomacy efforts is post-Communist Romania. The relationship management model proposed in this study fills the theoretical gap that would help public diplomacy practitioners understand the management of relationships and networks. Furthermore, this study advances a new framework for public diplomacy practices under the relational paradigm and argues that the relational dimensions proposed here are the main attributes that characterize the uniqueness of the relationship management process between any two countries in the world.

This study argues that public diplomacy is a long-term relational process of engaging, facilitating, catalyzing, and managing relationships with the members of a foreign society, through open dialogue that establishes an environment of trust and credibility, in which members of both societies can accommodate communal interests. The role of diplomats is to identify, facilitate, and catalyze bilateral relationships between the members of two countries, while at the same time catalyze, empower, and abilitate the members of the civil society in the host country. In practice, engaging in building

relationships between the members of two societies is a long-term pro-active process that has to be renewed constantly with each new generation.

From the perspective of the relational paradigm, public diplomacy is a fundamental component of a country's mission abroad, that aims to develop institutional relationships into long-lasting strategic structures that establishes and validates the embassy as a social, cultural, professional, and business network in the society in which it operates. In this context, the role of diplomats is to maintain, deepen, and broaden the embassy's relationships with the members of the civil society in which they serve and to ultimately manage the complex networks of relationships between the two countries. However, as illustrated in this study, the relationship management process of public diplomacy shows that the management of relationships and networks takes place only when the interacting societies are at the same level of development.

Limitations

This study focused on one U.S. embassy during 2001-2009. As a result, one limitation of this study is the fact that the findings are based on the analysis of data collected from seven U.S. diplomats who served in the U.S. embassy in Romania. It is important to note that the culture, political system, economic development, infrastructure, and the media system typical to Romania have influenced the results of this study, and thus, data collected from U.S. diplomats in other embassies around the world would have yielded findings specific to the host country.

The results of this study could also be influenced by the period of time chosen for analysis. Data collected over another period of time in the same country, or data

collected over the same period of time in another country could have yielded different results.

A limitation of qualitative studies is that the findings are not generalizable to a larger population. Consequently, another limitation of this study is that the results are not generalizable to public U.S. public diplomacy practices in other countries. However, this study's limitations are its strengths, as the qualitative approach adopted here, enabled the researcher to formulate a framework for public diplomacy practices under the relational paradigm, as well as to propose a new relationship management process for U.S. public diplomacy in Romania.

Future research

Since this study focused on only one U.S. embassy, it would be interesting to learn whether the relationship management process it is applicable in other countries or whether it is unique to certain countries/regions (e.g. post-Communist countries in Eastern Europe). Future research could also test the public diplomacy process in other countries characterized by specific cultural, economic, or political factors. This way future studies could determine what other variables could influence the new relationship management process of public diplomacy.

A more comprehensive analysis of U.S. public diplomacy practices in Europe or around the world would have to include a larger population of U.S. diplomats. A broader investigation of U.S. public diplomacy practices could further validate and develop the proposed relationship management process.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The first section of the interview refers to the roles of American diplomats in managing the United States image and reputation in foreign countries.

1. How do American diplomats manage America's image and reputation in everyday interactions and relationships with foreign publics?

2. How do you build and maintain a good image/reputation, for your country in your relationships with foreign publics?

3. What are the strategies that diplomats employ to establish a good reputation in relationship with foreign publics?

4. How do American diplomats build trust and credibility in relationships with foreign publics?
   - Probe: - Could you give me an example that would illustrate the importance of being open and trustworthy in a relationship with foreign publics?

5. Based on your professional experience, would you say that a country's diplomats are the managers of their nation's efforts to project its image in foreign countries?
   - Probe: - What are the most common tools and techniques that you would employ to project a positive image for the United States in Romania?
     - Could you help me understand this better with an example from your experience in Romania?

Before we move to the next section, is there anything that you would like to add, that I haven't asked you?

The next section refers to the networking process carried out by embassies in foreign countries.

6. How important is it, for American diplomats to build networks in foreign countries?

7. What are the most usual strategies that American diplomats employ to build networks in Romania?

8. How [what] would you define a network in a foreign country?
   - Probe: - Would it be satisfactory to have a good long list of names and contact information, or to connect the right people with one another in the right way?

9. What is the final goal for building networks in a foreign country?

10. After you build these complex interrelated networks how do you manage them?
    - Probe: do you have any training in that?

Before we move to the next section, is there anything that you would like to add, that I haven't asked you?

The next section refers more specifically to the relationship management process carried out by embassies in foreign countries.

11. In a foreign country, Romania for example, how do you identify the targeted public with which you intend to build relationships?
    - Probe: - From your experience: who would be the actors in a relationship between the United States and Romania?
      - Could you help me understand this better with an example from your experience in Romania?

12. How do you initiate and establish relationships with foreign publics?
    - Probe: - How do you engage the foreign counterpart in a relationship?
      - What are the most common tools and techniques that you would employ to engage Romanian representatives in a relationship with Americans?

13. Once a relationship is established, how do you maintain the relationship?
    - Probe: - What are the most common tools and techniques that you would employ to build and maintain a relationship?

14. What is usually the involvement of parts in an American-Romanian relationship?
    - Probe: - Do parts have an egalitarian status?
      - Could you help me understand this better with an example from your experience in Romania?

15. To what degree, would you say, is important to build personal relationships between American officials and representatives of the Romanian civil society: for example business people, companies CEOs, NGOs, media, artistic community, athletes and so one?

16. What are the roles of ambassadors and other diplomats in the relationship building process with foreign publics?

17. Why would you consider that it is important to establish good relationships with the civil society? Why?

18. During your tenure in Romania, have you ever found yourself in a situation when you acted as a link, as the facilitator between an American and a Romanian institution/organization or a company?
    - Probe: - Could you give me an example that would help me understand this better.

19. How often do ambassadors and other diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between American civil institutions or other companies and their counterparts in the foreign society in which you operate?

20. How often do you find yourself or the embassy for that matter, engaged in relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with NGOs, companies or community groups?

21. How often do ambassadors and other diplomats act as links, catalysts, or facilitators between community groups and government representatives within the foreign society in which they operate?

22. During your tenure in Romania have you ever found yourself acting as the manager of the relations between American companies/institutions or any American organization and Romanian counterparts?

23. Based on your experience, do you believe that it is common for public diplomacy professionals to become managers of institutional relationships between the two countries?
    - Probe: - Do you have an example from your tenure in Romania?

24. Which of these verbs would be most appropriate for American diplomats abroad: engaged in, facilitate, or manage relationships with foreign public?
    - Probe: - Is any one of these more important than the other?
      - [in any one case] Why?
      - What would be in your opinion the percentage in which you would find diplomats involved in any of these in every day practices?

Is there anything else that you would like to add here that I haven't asked you?

The next section refers more specifically to the communication process in the relationships carried out by embassies in foreign countries.

25. What is the role of dialogue and communication in building and maintaining relationships with foreign publics?

26. What are the best ways to communicate with foreign publics?

27. What is the best way to build a dialogic relationship with Romanian counterparts?
    - Probe: - How do you do that?
      - Could you help me understand this better with an example from your tenure in Romania?

28. Based on your experience, what would be the role of communication in a relationship between American officials and Romanian publics?

- Probe: - Communication is a tool or an objective in institutional relationships?

29. What is in general the relationship between the American embassy and the Romanian media?
    - Probe: - What happens in case of a crisis?

30. When we talked about dialogue, another concept came to mind, and that was listening. In your relationships with Romanian counterparts, how important is to show genuine interest in others' perspective, ideas, and values? Why?

Is there anything that you would like to add in this section that I forgot to ask?

The next section refers to culture and how it affects the relationships carried out by American embassy in Romania.

31. How important is culture in implementing American public diplomacy programs or initiatives in Romania?
    - Probe: - Have you ever encountered any impediment in maintaining relationships with Romanian counterparts because of cultural differences?
      - From your perspective, what was the main cultural obstacle?

32. How did you identify the common values in a relationship with foreign publics?
    - Probe: - What strategies did you employ to find common values that would help build relationships with Romanians?
      - Could you give me an example from your tenure in Romania?

Is there anything else that you would like to add and I forgot to ask?

In the last section of our conversation, I'd like to switch a little, and ask you few questions about the American embassy in Romania.

33. In the course of these years while you acted as an American diplomat abroad, how did you perceive the role of the American embassy in executing public diplomacy in Romania?
    - Probe: - At one point, I believe 2005, I saw a nice announcement, in fact a job posting opened for Romanians to work for the American embassy. Is this a common practice around the world for American embassies?

34. In your opinion, how important is it for American embassy to incorporate public diplomacy activities and programs in its overall functions in Romania?
    - Probe: - If you would have to give an answer in percentages, what would be the percentages for traditional diplomacy and respectively for public diplomacy in the embassy functions?

35. Could you give me any examples of activities/programs promoted by the embassy, or in which the embassy would be involved that would be categorized as public diplomacy?
    - Probe: -What would your/the official diplomat role/function be in this/these case(s)?

36. From what you've seen and experienced, is there an American public diplomacy approach specific tailored for Romania?
    - Probe: - How would you describe the US public diplomacy efforts in Romania?
      - What do you perceive to be the main focus of public diplomacy in Romania?

37. In your opinion, has public diplomacy gained any importance in the diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania?
    - Probe: - Could you give me an example that would illustrate this?

38. From your experience in Romania, have you ever perceived that public diplomacy influenced in any way the relations between the United States and Romania?
    - Probe: - [If yes] In which way?
      - Is there any example that could illustrate this?

VITA

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